Toinette

By Barbara Yechton

the
university of
connecticut
libraries

hbl, stx PZ 7.K87To
'Toinette,
3 9153 00572616 3

PZ/7/K87/To

BY

BARBARA YECHTON

Scaramouche, and Other Stories. 12mo, cloth, 75 cents.

'Toinette, and Other Stories for Friendly Girls. 12mo, cloth, 75 cents.

Little Saint Hilary, and Other Stories. Artistic combination cloth, 50 cents.

A Matter of Honor, and Other Stories. Artistic combination cloth, 50 cents.

Two Knights-Errant, and Other Stories. Artistic combination cloth, 50 cents.

Golden Rod Stories. 13 in Series, being the Stories in above three volumes bound separate in paper covers. Each, 10 cents; per set (in wrapper), $1.00.

THOMAS WHITTAKER

2 AND 3 BIBLE HOUSE, NEW YORK

"'Toinette was about seventeen, tall and slim, and very erect."

Crane, Lyda Farrington

'TOINETTE
AND OTHER STORIES

BY

BARBARA YECHTON, pseud.

AUTHOR OF "INGLESIDE," "LITTLE SAINT HILARY," "A MATTER OF HONOR," "TWO KNIGHTS-ERRANT," "WE TEN; OR, THE STORY OF THE ROSES," "DERICK," "SCARAMOUCHE."

ILLUSTRATED BY MINNA BROWN

NEW YORK
THOMAS WHITTAKER
2 AND 3 BIBLE HOUSE

PZ
7
K87
To

Copyright, 1897
By Thomas Whittaker

BURR PRINTING HOUSE, NEW YORK.

Affectionately Dedicated

TO

THE GIRLS' FRIENDLY SOCIETY

in England and America, and to all "friendly" girls, wherever they may be, by one who is in love and sympathy with them.

"BEAR YE ONE ANOTHER'S BURDENS."

CONTENTS

I. 'Toinette 1

II. One, or the Other 23

III. Philipine's Lovers 61

IV. A Bit of Friendliness 115

'TOINETTE.

Etta Norcroft and Lena Stein were close friends, "chums" the girls used to call them, and "Siamese Twins" and "Twin Shadows," because they were so devoted to each other.

They were employed in the same store, though at different counters, and always walked to and from business together. They dressed as much alike as their mothers would allow, liked the same people, read the same books, sat in the same pew in church, and were members of the same Friendly Circle. Besides this they were under a promise to spend two evenings in the week together, Etta going to Lena on Tuesday evenings and Lena to Etta on Fridays; on the Rockaway excursions they were inseparable, and in church fairs and sociables they worked as one. People prophesied that so violent a friendship

could not last long, but it did, unruffled, for two years, and they were both very happy, until 'Toinette Delfois came to be a clerk in Lena's department.

'Toinette was about seventeen, tall and slim and very erect, with jet black curly hair, and a small, clear-cut, oval face, out of which shone a pair of splendidly brilliant dark eyes. Her manners were reserved, almost abrupt, and this and the scornful curves which her delicate red lips often assumed prejudiced her fellow-workers against her from the very first. With the hasty injustice which girls so often show to one another, they misjudged everything she said and did; they declared that she was "stuck up" and "airish" and "conceited." They mimicked her strong French accent and odd pronunciation, made pointed remarks about "foreigners who had left their country for their country's good," and soon discovering her almost entire lack of business knowledge, banded themselves together to expose her ignorance on every possible occasion.

All except Lena.

Though not specially attracted at first to

'Toinette, Lena felt sorry for her. As she expressed it, "It seemed so mean for so many to be against one;" besides, she had a suspicion that 'Toinette was not as indifferent to the treatment she was receiving as she pretended to be. Once she fancied she saw the proud, scornful lips quiver when Carrie Eastman said something about "airs and patches not agreeing," with a meaning glance at 'Toinette's shabby dress; and once when she went forward and showed the girl where to find the box of ribbons she was nervously hunting for, Lena was sure there were tears in the brilliant eyes that met hers gratefully for an instant. That touched Lena's tender heart, and after that she quietly but steadily and openly was kind and friendly to 'Toinette. In vain the girls sneered and teased and scolded. Lena only laughed good-naturedly and continued to teach and in a way to shield her new *protégé*.

'Toinette accepted these friendly advances without any effusion, often with the barest acknowledgment. More than once the girls declared that Lena was "a fool for her pains," and Lena herself might have thought so too but for a glance and

a word now and then which satisfied her that 'Toinette did appreciate her efforts in her behalf.

After a while, on the days when Etta was obliged to take her luncheon at a later hour, 'Toinette would bring her lunch and sit beside Lena to eat it. Unlike most of the girls, she talked very little about herself, and Lena was not inquisitive; but gradually the older girl came to know that 'Toinette was an orphan, and lived with an aunt who was not specially kind to her. This last Lena gathered rather from the other girl's reticence on certain points than from any direct statement that she made. There were other members in the family—her aunt's children, a girl, Clothilde, and a boy, a young man named Alphonse, whom 'Toinette always spoke of with a scornful curl of her lip, and an uncle, her father's brother, of whom she was very much afraid. "I hate him!" she said vehemently one day, in a sudden gust of anger, her face darkening, her hands clinched. "He is what one would call a deveel! He turned my brothare—my beloved Maurice—out on the street, and he paremit me not to go with 'im. But I go

yet, when Maurice sends for me. Oh, that it will be *soon!*" with such a passionate longing in her voice that Lena put her arm across 'Toinette's shoulders and kissed her to show her sympathy —a caress which 'Toinette accepted without the slightest response.

But if she was reticent about her personal affairs, 'Toinette was quite fluent on another subject. Though her pronunciation was peculiar, she read English easily and devoured all the stories and novels that she could get hold of. These she never tired of telling Lena about; often picturing most graphically in her abrupt way what she would have done had she been the heroine in the particular case described. So thoroughly excited would she become over these imaginary situations, and so disgusted with her own surroundings, that Lena got quite provoked with her.

"Why, what a goose you are, 'Toinette," she said bluntly one day, when the French girl had given her a vivid description of the last story she had read and had drawn a sharp contrast between the heroine's glowing happiness and her own

dismal lot. "Those stories are only made up, not a word is true. What's the use of working yourself up to such a pitch? I don't think you ought to read so many novels, they just upset you and spoil you for every-day things. Miss Ashton tells us girls not to read 'em if we find they make us discontented with what we have to do. That's the reason I stopped taking stories from the lib'ry. Anyway, you ain't a heroine in a book, you're a girl in a store; an' getting along first rate, too, ain't you?" with a pardonable pride in her *protégé's* advance.

"I may be a 'aroine' more than you think," returned 'Toinette, tossing her pretty head, while the color deepened in her cheeks. "You know not all, Mees Le*nah;* and you are vare rude. You might the goose be, indeed."

Her lips curled, and she rose quickly from her seat. But Lena caught her dress and pulled her down again with a surprised, "Why, 'Toinette, you surely ain't mad because I called you a goose! Why, that isn't anything in English. I often say that to Etta, an' she doesn't mind a bit. Come, sit down again; I want to tell you

what a good time we had at the 'Friendly' last night. I do think your uncle might let you go with me some Monday evening." And in hearing about the doings of the "Friendly" girls, in whom she had begun to take quite an interest, 'Toinette's ill temper soon wore away.

Though Etta was not present to note the growing friendliness between the two girls, she very soon heard of it—a highly colored account, too, which aroused her anger and jealousy. Jealousy was Etta's besetting sin; she hated to have Lena show the slightest attention to any one but herself, and in this instance did not hesitate to express to her friend her entire disapproval of any intimacy with 'Toinette.

"But, Etta, I am only just pleasant with her," pleaded Lena, "and I can't drop her without any reason for it. I'm sure you'd be the first one to be kind to her if you saw how mean the girls act to her. And, as far as that goes, it seems to me 'Friendly' girls ought to show themselves friendly to all that needs 'em. I know Miss Ashton'd say so; she's always telling us to look out for opportunities to help one an-

other.'' Then fancying she saw signs of relenting in Etta's face, she added imprudently, "Truly, Etta, she's a real nice girl when you know her."

"I've no wish to know her any better than I do now," interrupted Etta sharply, knitting her heavy black brows. "One friend is enough for *me*. But some people like changes; an' if you prefer Miss Delfois to me, you know you've only to say so."

"Oh! Etta, how can you talk to me that way?" cried Lena in tears. "You *know* I don't want anybody but you. It's only be-c-cause she seems so lonely and the girls treated her so badly. She'll think it *awful* mean of me."

"Then give me up and take her if you feel so badly about it"—Etta's voice was hard, almost fierce—"but you can't have us both. I will have *all* or *none*."

This was a favorite saying of Etta's, and one which always brought Lena to terms. She knew that Etta was capable of carrying it out, and how could she ever exist without Etta's friendship! After all, what was 'Toinette to her compared

with Etta? So after one more feeble protest Lena promised to have as little as possible to say to the French girl, and peace was restored between the friends.

But for the first day or two Lena found it very difficult to keep her promise. She had not realized how well acquainted 'Toinette and she had become, or how much her *protégé* depended upon her for companionship. And it was *so* hard to see the surprised, puzzled look in 'Toinette's dark eyes change to scornful indignation without being able to give one word of explanation, for that Etta had strictly forbidden. The very hardest, though, was one evening when, as the girls crowded into the cloak-room to put on their hats and wraps, 'Toinette drew close to Lena, and under cover of the buzz of general conversation going on, laid a hand on the older girl's arm and whispered: "L*enah*, is it mad that you are with me? If I have offend you, believe me, I know not what I have done; and paremit me your forgiveness I ask." The touch was so timid and yet so clinging; the eyes and voice so beseeching and unlike proud, indifferent

'Toinette that Lena was both moved and amazed. Her heart went out to the pretty young creature, and she squeezed 'Toinette's hand as it lay on her sleeve.

"I'm not a bit mad, 'Toinette," she said hurriedly, "only I can't talk to you as much as I used to—"

"Then I am again your friend?" 'Toinette asked eagerly. "Say but the word, Le*nah*, I beg—I am your friend?" There was a world of entreaty in her tone.

"Aren't you ready, Lena?" demanded Etta's voice at her elbow. "I can't wait another minute. I have to stop somewhere on our way home. Come on, do." There was an irritable tone in her voice that told Lena she had overheard 'Toinette's remark and was angry.

Shaking off 'Toinette's hand with an impatient little movement, Lena turned, took Etta's arm, and without a word walked away. After that 'Toinette made no further advances, and she treated Lena with the same scornful indifference that she accorded to the other girls in her department.

Though Lena felt this change of manner, she also felt that she ought to be satisfied—though as time went on she was not. For Etta's sake it was as well things should continue as they were, but, all the same, Lena's conscience troubled her very often. She knew she had not treated 'Toinette well. Miss Ashton impressed upon her girls that they should be "friendly" to all who needed them—and lately Lena had had a wretched misgiving that all was not going well with 'Toinette. Once she and Etta had met 'Toinette going into an ice-cream saloon with a bold-faced, flashily dressed man, and she had seen that same man hanging around the corner about the time the store closed. Lena felt instinctively that he was not the sort of man 'Toinette should go with, and it troubled her. Yet what could she do? If Etta were only not so jealous, and would let her speak to 'Toinette and explain, she might get back the influence over the girl which she knew she had had once. And yet Miss Ashton herself had said, when some one spoke of Etta's jealous disposition, that Lena must always remember that her chosen friend had the first claim

upon her, and not do anything to excite this failing of hers. But wasn't it a duty, too, to help 'Toinette?

These thoughts pressed very seriously upon Lena one evening as she walked home from business alone—Etta's mother was ill and Etta had been obliged to remain at home that day—and she found herself longing for Miss Ashton's return that she might have her advice. The lady who was taking the "circle" during Miss Ashton's absence was not like her own dear Associate—perhaps she would write Miss Ashton; but letters were so unsatisfactory and took so long to write. Absorbed in these thoughts, Lena was thoroughly startled when suddenly a hand closed round her arm with a convulsive grip and 'Toinette's voice panted out, "I know you care not for me, Mees Le*nah*, but, oh! I ask, I *beg vare* hard that you paremit me to walk with you just to where I live."

Lena drew the trembling little hand through her arm and held it. "Why, certainly," she answered instantly. "Why, 'Toinette, who's

frightened you? You're as pale as a ghost. What's the matter?"

'Toinette caught her breath and tried to answer carelessly: "I am not so frighten, but I care not to walk this evening with that genteelman," motioning over her shoulder.

Lena glanced back, and there crossing the street to the opposite side was the bold-faced man she had seen with 'Toinette. "Oh! 'Toinette," she cried impulsively, "*don't* go with that man; he isn't good, I'm sure he isn't. You surely don't care for him?"

"I like 'im not vare much—sometimes I like 'im not at all," admitted 'Toinette. "But he is *vare* reetch and he *adore* me. He say he will give me fine robes and diamonds and money as much as I want, and take me out of that meesarible store—see? He give me all this when I tell him I go marry 'im, and maybe I do so some day."

"Don't believe him; don't have *anything* to do with him," insisted Lena. "He's a bad man; I can see it in his face. And why did

you run away from him if you think you may marry him?"

"I told you I like 'im not all the time, and to-night is one of those times," answered 'Toinette impatiently. Then with one of the sudden gusts of feeling that Lena remembered so well, she cried vehemently, "I *could* not be worse treated than I am now. My uncle he beat me last night. I have the marks. He take my money and make me wear rags. I get not enough to eat. Oh, it is *hell!* And Maurice, my beloved Maurice, writes not to me any more. I am *vare* meesarible. Why should I not go with him that cares for me? I have promise to say yes or no this week. I wanted not to say anything to-night, for then I go away with him; and he beg, he pray, what you call *beseech*, then he try to make me go. That frighten me. I see you, I run to you; now you know," with a shrug of her shoulders.

"Don't give him an answer this week, *please*, 'Toinette," urged Lena, "promise me you won't. Just wait this week, won't you?" Perhaps Miss Ashton would be home on Friday, and Lena

knew she would help 'Toinette out of this dreadful difficulty, and she had such a splendid way with girls she would be sure to get 'Toinette to do as she wanted. "*Do* promise," she pleaded.

"But you care not," said 'Toinette suspiciously; "you treat me *vare* bad. I said I speak not to you again."

"I couldn't help it, 'Toinette; indeed I couldn't. I'll tell you about it some day. Only trust me now, and don't speak to that man this week," again pleaded Lena.

"But *he* will speak to me; he waits for me every evening, and as I am alone, he will not go away."

"I'll walk home with you *every* night," cried Lena. In her excitement and earnest desire to help the other girl, she entirely forgot Etta. "He sha'n't trouble you. Now, will you promise, 'Toinette? Do, like a dear girl." She laid her arm across 'Toinette's shoulders and pressed her to her as they stood in the dingy, dirty hallway of the French girl's home.

"Yes, I prom*ise*," said 'Toinette after a mo-

ment's hesitation; then as she whirled herself from Lena's encircling arm she added with a toss of her head, "But, I say not that I will not ever marry 'im; good-night to you, Mees L*enah*."

But Lena was satisfied for the while, for she had felt the warm, clinging pressure of 'Toinette's little hand even as she uttered her saucy speech.

Etta was away from business for a whole week, and for four evenings Lena walked home with 'Toinette, though she said nothing to Etta about it when she saw her; in fact, she was thankful for Etta's absence. On Saturday Miss Ashton would be home, and that evening Lena intended going to see her to tell her everything and to get her help with both 'Toinette and Etta—for Lena had determined that, though Etta would always be her dearest friend, she would never again give up 'Toinette.

But, alas! for her plans. As she and 'Toinette sallied out of the store arm in arm on Friday evening there stood Etta! She had come up to walk home with Lena.

Lena turned pale, and actually gasped with dismay, though she pressed 'Toinette's arm closer to her side. But Etta was so furiously angry that she dashed forward and tried to push 'Toinette aside, pouring out the sharpest, most unkind speeches Lena had ever heard her utter. "Lena is *my* friend, not yours," she raged. "She doesn't care a jot about you; she's shown it to you plain enough; but you will hang on to her the moment my back's turned. Just you leave her alone, do you understand? She's too soft to treat you as you deserve."

"O Etta!" gasped Lena, trying to shake off the horrid, faint feeling that oppressed her. But 'Toinette broke in; every particle of color had left her face, and her eyes were blazing. "You can have your friend," she said scornfully and distinctly. "I will not, ne*vare* again speak to her. And I 'ang not on to any one. I have friends of my own, grawnd, reetch friends that would *keel* you if they heard you so insult me. Mees Le*nah*, I take back my prom*ise*. I know what you are now." Parting the group of frightened girls who had gathered about them,

'Toinette walked away with the air of a tragedy queen, and Lena knew to whom she was going! . . .

Neither Etta nor Lena ever forgot the talk they had that afternoon. For the first and only time in their lives they seemed to have changed natures. With an eloquence new to her Lena told 'Toinette's story and pleaded most earnestly with Etta to go with her to the French girl's home and make friends with her. Then when Etta still refused, Lena grew bold as a lion, and spoke some home truths which hurt and shocked Etta beyond expression. She stood dumb with a sudden conviction that had come to her; but Lena thought her heart was still hard, and she grew almost beside herself.

"If 'Toinette goes wrong this night it will lie at your door," she cried, shaking a trembling forefinger at Etta. "You can do as you please, but I'm not going home till I find out what's become of her."

Turning back, she almost ran in the direction of 'Toinette's home. A terrible fear of being too late seized her, yet she dare not take a car

for fear she should miss the one she sought on the way. And as she ran she prayed for 'Toinette, just a word or two over and over; she could not think connectedly.

But God heard.

In the very doorway of 'Toinette's home she came upon the girl. She carried a small bundle, and tried to push by Lena to get out. But Lena held her with all her strength while she talked and coaxed and pleaded, with her heart and soul in her voice.

"I care not to-night if he be the deveel," 'Toinette cried fiercely. "I will be bad too. Everybody is bad. You too, Mees two-face Le*nah*. Why do you trouble me? I ask you not. I hate you! Go back to your grawnd Etta. Oh, you are fine *friendly* girls, you are! Bah! get out of my way. I look on you like a worm and I will step on you if you go not." She flung Lena off and reached the door, but just then it opened from the outside and Etta entered, and closing it, stood with her back against it.

She was very pale, and she spoke in a dull,

level voice as she humbly apologized to 'Toinette for what she had said and done at the store door. Lena stared in amazement, so did 'Toinette; then 'Toinette burst out scornfully, "You Americans crazy people! I care not at all for your apol—what you call it? Get out of my way, do you hear? I go out. I go and you shall not stop me."

With a quick, sudden movement she pushed Etta aside; but at the same instant Lena sprang forward and throwing her arms around 'Toinette, burst into a fit of bitter weeping. "O 'Toinette, 'Toinette, if you go my heart will be broken!" she sobbed; "for you will never come back."

"I know it," cried 'Toinette savagely. "I swear I *nevare* will, for they, my people, have turned me out; but it is myself alone that shall suffer."

"Oh, come to my house," Lena urged. "My mother will make you welcome; I know she will; and you can sleep with me. O 'Toinette, suppose Maurice should come back and find you gone!"

And now, just as she spoke, a strange thing

happened. The postman's whistle was heard; he opened the hall door, pushing 'Toinette and Lena back with it, and held out a letter, calling "Antoinette Delfois!" casting a curious glance at the group under the dirty flaring hall light before he withdrew.

In an instant 'Toinette had caught the letter. "*Maurice*, my *Maurice!*" she screamed, as her eyes fell on the handwriting. Tearing it open with shaking fingers, she read it rapidly to the end. It was short. Then dropping her arms by her sides she stared at Lena with wide-open, frightened eyes.

"He comes to-morrow," she whispered—"Maurice, to take me away with 'im, to live with 'im, to be loved by 'im, to be happy! My beloved brothare! He forgot me nevare! *Ah!* and had you not forced me here to remain I would have been away with that man that is bad, before it came. I am *just* saved!"

She leaned heavily against the wall and the letter fell from her nerveless fingers.

"Thank God! Oh, thank God!" uttered the two girls with one accord.

"I had begun to think there was no God for me," said 'Toinette slowly. "But now, ah, *now* I know there is. Yes, I thank 'Im from my *vare* heart; and you too, Le*nah.*" She raised her arms and laid them close about Lena's neck and burst out crying.

ONE OR THE OTHER.

Kitty Farrell was the very last person, the girls declared, that they had ever expected Elsie Heywood would take up and be friends with. Elsie herself was sometimes surprised at the enjoyment she found in Kitty's society, for they were certainly very unlike in appearance and disposition, and in a social way Elsie was the higher of the two. She had lost her mother—she still wore black for her—but her father was alive and made a comfortable living, so that though Elsie was learning to be a dressmaker, and expected to make that her trade by-and-by, they were not at all in straitened circumstances. The eldest Heywood girl kept house for the family; they had a piano, and Elsie played and sung a little; she was neat in her appearance and very ladylike in her manners, and Miss Ash-

ton called her her "right hand," because she was so helpful and reliable in the circle and Bible class.

Elsie never missed a Friendly meeting, she was always ready to take her full share of the work that was to be done, whether it were helping to get ready a box for a missionary, or making tiny socks or sacks for the outfits prepared for the helpless babies, or getting up a fair. She loved books too, and enjoyed the excellent free circulating library provided by the church. In appearance she was tall and rather inclined to be stout; she had calm, steadfast gray eyes, a well-shaped mouth that had very decided curves, and a chin that was a little too square for feminine beauty. But she had also a quantity of pretty brown hair, which was always neatly arranged; and her smile was particularly pretty—like a flash of sunlight, brightening her quiet face into positive beauty while it lasted.

Kitty Farrell, on the other hand, was not tall, though she gave that impression, perhaps because she was so slender and straight. Her light hazel eyes were bright and roguish in expression, and

the upward curve of her little nose, as well as of the corners of her merry, rather wide mouth, confirmed what she herself often declared—that she could be "sassy" on occasion. She had a good complexion—with a little tinge of healthy color—and plenty of warm red brown curly hair, which, when Elsie first knew her, she wore cut on the sides in a bushy mass and sticking out in loose, untidy locks about her face in a fashion that was anything but nice. At this time, too, she wore a large hat nearly covered with bright red roses and tilted very much to one side of her head; she laughed and talked a good deal and loudly, and prided herself on being "awful independent."

Kitty had been in innumerable classes in the Sunday-school, the teachers of which agreed in saying that she was perfectly unmanageable, and delighted in nothing so much as talking and upsetting order. Her parents being dead, she supported herself by making neckties, and boarded with some friends, whose influence over her was far from good. She had drifted away from Sunday-school and was beginning to get the reputa-

tion of going to "balls" and being "wild," when she and Elsie Heywood met one evening at a fair got up by the "Friendly" to raise money toward the endowment fund of the church.

At the close of the evening Elsie whispered to her Associate, "Miss Ashton, do you mind if I bring Kitty Farrell to Bible Class next Sunday morning? I'm in hopes perhaps I'll get her to come regular."

"Why, certainly; bring her, Elsie," was the cordial response. "I shall be glad to see her. I only hope that you will succeed."

"I'm going to try, anyway," said Elsie; "she's got such a nice face, seems's if she must have some good in her."

"Be patient with her, my dear, very, *very* patient. Don't expect too sudden results, and, above all, pray for God's blessing on your efforts." Then with a warm hand-clasp Miss Ashton turned to speak to some one else.

About the same time Kitty was saying to a companion, "Talk about Elsie Heywood being stuck up an' airish—why, I think she's awful

nice! She's the friendliest Friendly girl *I* ever come across, anyhow," with a teasing glance at the girl beside her.

"Oh, yes, just wait till you see how long it lasts—'new broom,' you know," answered Lizzie Henwick, a little nettled. "An' she *is* airish. I've never known her lay herself out to be so nice to anybody before. 'Twon't last—she'll drop you, you'll see."

Kitty laughed; secretly she felt very much flattered by Elsie's preference, but she wouldn't for the world have let Lizzie know that. "H'm!" she said, with a toss of her head that set the roses nodding. "Let her drop—who cares? I ain't dying for her acquaintance. But all the same, Lizzie Henwick, she don't look like that style. I think she's got an awful nice face, and she acts like *a perfec'* lady." And with that she darted off before Lizzie, who was slower of tongue, could get out a word.

True to her promise, Kitty appeared at the Bible Class on Sunday morning. She met with a kind welcome from Miss Ashton, and sat beside Elsie, who paid her all the deference due an

invited guest. She was fairly quiet, for her and appeared interested in the lesson ; but no one, except perhaps Elsie, expected to see her there a second time. To the surprise of all, however, and Elsie's delight, she came again and again, and finally, after several weeks had elapsed, asked to have her name put on Miss Ashton's roll as a regular member of the class. Then the two girls began to be quite intimate, and soon after a great change for the better began to be noticeable in Kitty. She greatly admired Elsie—her quiet, nice way of speaking, her knowledge of books, her low voice, her lady-like manners—and she was touched and impressed far more than she would ever have acknowledged by Elsie's having voluntarily sought her out and made her her friend. Almost unconsciously she began to try to be like Elsie, as far as her entirely different rearing and temperament would allow. After a while the bushy mass of short hair on each side of her head and across her forehead was brushed straight back off her face, and Elsie's words of warm admiration, "O Kitty, how becoming ! and how *lovely* your

hair is; it just waves and ripples all over your head!" more than compensated for the teasing she had had from the people she lived with, who resented her friendship with Elsie and Elsie's growing influence over her.

The big tilted-to-one-side hat was the next thing to disappear, being succeeded by a simple affair, neatly trimmed, and very becoming to Kitty's round, bright little face. Instead of going on excursions, and I am afraid even to picnics and parties on Sunday afternoons, those afternoons were now spent with Elsie either at her comfortable home, singing hymns—of which they were both very fond—while Elsie played the accompaniment on the piano, or making themselves useful with the little ones at the Children's Service, or, when the weather was fine, in taking long walks together, during which they talked to their hearts' content. More than anything else Kitty enjoyed these talks, for after they had discussed every-day incidents and their mutual acquaintances, as girls will, they invariably fell back upon the books that Elsie had read —that is, she retold the stories that had most im-

pressed her—of romance, history, and travel—and any curious or interesting thing that she could remember. Kitty was no reader herself, but she did love to listen to any one reading or telling a story, and to her limited experience Elsie's knowledge seemed boundless.

Elsie had some serious faults—though at that time Kitty thought she had none—but she had also a strong, brave nature, and she was trying most sincerely to be a Christian, so that Kitty's character was both strengthened and benefited by the friendship. Nor was the advantage all on her side ; as the acquaintance, begun in a spirit of helpfulness, ripened into a steady friendship, and the two girls knew more of each other, Elsie found an enjoyment in Kitty's society that she had by no means expected. The younger girl was quick-witted, quick of tongue, and lively in disposition. Elsie said she was "a cure for the blues ;" though wilful, almost aggressively independent and quick-tempered—like a little tempest—and sharp and peppery when angry, she was yet quickly over it, and would acknowledge a fault with an honesty and humil-

ity that were a wonder to the slower to wrath but more obstinate Elsie. There was a roguishness too, a buoyancy of temperament about Kitty that was very attractive. When she chose to be so, Elsie told her sister, no one could be more winning than Kitty Farrell ; and then her frank and genuine admiration of Elsie was something that that young person could not resist.

There was one point, however, on which they did not agree, and that was Kitty's fondness for going to what she called "balls," where she was apt to remain until one or two o'clock in the morning, being completely tired out for several days after, for she was not strong. "'Tain't any use your talkin'," she said impatiently one day when Elsie spoke to her again about the vexed question, "I've just *got* to dance. Why, I'd rather dance than eat any time. You don't care for it, but I *love* it ! And there's times—after sittin' over them old neckties all day—when my feet just ache to get movin'. An' I love the music too—you needn't look at me that way, Miss Partickeler ; 'tain't the fellers I goes there for—though I must confess I ain't never a wall-

flower. I'd just as lief dance with a girl if she's got a good step—honest I would. I do believe it's really the movin' about—the exercise—that I enjoy. Oh, I tell you," she added earnestly, "it's awful sometimes to have to sit quiet sewin', sewin' all day long when you'd just *love* to be stirrin' about. You don't mind it? Well, you see, we ain't all built the same way."

There was a little catch in Kitty's voice, a little sharpness in her tone that told Elsie how much in earnest she was. In a vague sort of way the calmer, more phlegmatic girl began to be aware that what she had regarded as merely a love of pleasure might be, in this other nervous, active temperament, an actual need. "Now, if you only belonged to the Friendly," she said, a little wistfulness in her tone, "then you could join the gymnasium and the dancing class. The girls do the Broom Drill *beautifully;* and you wouldn't need to go to balls if you had a nice jolly dance one evening in every week—would you?"

"'Course I wouldn't," answered Kitty. "I'd love to join a gymnasium." Then after a little

pause she added, with a glance half roguish, half defiant, at Elsie, "There ain't no law 'gainst my bein' a Friendly girl, is there?"

Elsie's heart gave a little joyful throb; this was what she had longed for, prayed for, from the beginning of their acquaintance; she had talked of her beloved Society, her dear Associate, and given glowing accounts of all the pleasures and benefits the Friendly girls enjoyed; but knowing Kitty's wilful nature, she had forborne to urge her becoming a member, hoping that she would yet—as she had done with regard to the Bible Class—make the advance herself. And now it had come, her hope was realized. "Why, no!" she exclaimed warmly; "and, what's more, I'm sure that Miss Ashton'll make you *very* welcome. You know you'll have to be on probation for six months, then you'll be admitted. I'm awfully glad, Kitty! Then we can go to the circle and work together. Oh, and you must join the embroidery class, and learn that *lovely* stitch I was trying to show you the other night."

"Guess I c'n stand the probation business,"

Kitty began, with a toss of her head; then, wheeling round suddenly, she caught hold of Elsie's arm, pressing it to her, and laying her cheek against Elsie's shoulder, she finished with the whispered words: "Leastways, I can *now* —with you to help me."

So Kitty's name was proposed for membership, and in due course of time she became a Friendly girl; and surely no member ever enjoyed more the privileges of the Society than did she. She joined the gymnasium, the dancing class—"balls" were at this time a thing of the past—the cooking and embroidery classes, and I don't know how many more besides, entering into each with all the enthusiasm of her impulsive nature. She never missed a Tuesday or Friday evening, when the gymnasium and dancing classes met; and in dainty embroidery she soon almost if not quite equalled Elsie, who had hitherto borne the reputation of being the finest worker in that class. But Elsie seemed not to mind this in the least—in fact, she took a great pride in Kitty's success at needlework, and they continued to be devoted friends until one

sad, dreadful evening which they neither of them ever forgot.

The Friendly had gotten up another fair, for the same object as the year before, and the girls had all worked hard to make it a success. Elsie and Kitty had each worked for it an elaborate piece of embroidery ; they had chosen the same pattern, the same colors, each had put in her best work, and now, as the dainty sofa-cushions lay side by side on a table it would have been very difficult, almost impossible, to decide which was the prettier.

They were very much admired, but being higher in price than the other things on the table —though not higher than was deserved—they were not sold the first evening of the fair. On the second evening, which was also the last, as Miss Ashton stood chatting with some friends at the upper end of the crowded room, Rosie Tyler came softly up behind her and gave her sleeve a little pull, at the same time whispering breathlessly, " O Miss Ashton, the girls are quarrelling awful—do come and stop 'em as soon as you can.''

Miss Ashton instantly excused herself to her friends and gave her whole attention to Rosie. "Who is quarrelling? What is it about?" she asked quickly.

"Kitty Farrell and Elsie Heywood," answered Rosie. "Somebody proposed that the people here should vote for whichever was the prettiest cushion, at so much a vote—the money to go to the fair, you know—an' the one that got the most votes should be presented to the girl that made it. An' Kitty's getting all the votes, an' somehow—I don't know how it began—Elsie's awful mad, she says Kitty's cheated, an' that made Kitty furious, an' she's giving it to Elsie like everything, an' oh, it's just awful!"

Before the explanation was half finished Miss Ashton was threading her way rapidly through the crowd to the corner where, surrounded and shielded from the throng by a close circle of curious onlookers, stood the two girls in angry dispute, though the worst was over before their Associate reached them. Elsie was very pale, her eyebrows were drawn together in a heavy frown, all the sweet curves were gone from her

lips and they were set like a vise. Kitty's cheeks were scarlet, her eyes fairly flashing, and in her rage the bitter, scornful words came so fast to her tongue's end that she could hardly get them out connectedly. "I never cheated in my life," she was saying as Miss Ashton approached, "an' I ain't goin' to begin now with an old sofa-cushion, I'll have you to know."

"I said you had not acted fairly," answered Elsie, in a cold, calm, almost contemptuous tone; "but if you choose to call it cheating, why do so—the cap must fit. 'Tisn't the cushion I care for, but to think that you could act so mean—*you!*"

"Oh, *don't* you? ha! ha! that's pretty good," laughed Kitty provokingly. "Why, you are jealous—that's what's the matter with you—jealous 'cause people think my cushion's prettier'n yours. *You're* the mean one, not I."

"Oh, hush, hush!" broke in their Associate's shocked voice. "Why, Elsie! Kitty! *quarrelling!* Surely there must be a great mistake somewhere—come in here and tell me what has made this trouble." Throwing an arm around

each, she drew them quickly with her into a little adjoining room and closed the door. "Now," she said, with gentle authority, "tell me what has happened to upset the friendship between you two—a friendship so helpful to you both and so beautiful that I have been very proud of it, and held it up as an example for other girls to follow."

Kitty gave a quick, surprised glance at Miss Ashton, and a wave of color swept over Elsie's face even to the roots of her hair, but neither of them said a word.

Seating herself on one of the settees in the room, Miss Ashton drew the girls down on either side of her, and taking a hand of each in her cool, firm clasp, she said, "I am waiting to hear that story. Elsie, you are the eldest; suppose you begin." And after a silence of a moment or two Elsie gave in her usual deliberate way her account of what had happened.

As she went on Kitty got very much excited, and tried to break in with angry remarks; but with a loving pressure of the hot, clammy little hand that lay in hers Miss Ashton restrained

her, saying firmly, "Not yet, Kitty; wait, dear, until Elsie has finished, and then she will have to listen while you tell your side of the story."

And listen Elsie did, in stony silence, when Kitty's turn came to speak.

"Well, girls," said their Associate slowly, after she had heard both sides and asked some questions, "as far as I can see, this trouble between you has been made entirely by meddlesome outsiders—tattling and misrepresenting what has been most innocently said and done by you both. In my judgment, the quarrel hasn't a leg of its own to stand on. I know how you have enjoyed being together—what a pleasure and comfort this friendship has been to you both—and I know, too, that you really love each other very dearly. There has been no actual fault on either side in this affair—I mean no intention to deceive or hurt or annoy each other—it is only a misunderstanding that should not last between two such sensible girls as you are. So I want you, dears, to make friends now, before we leave this room." With a sudden swift

movement she brought the two hands that she held together—palm against palm—and quickly interlaced the fingers. "Now you are fast friends again," she said, smiling brightly at them.

To her great surprise Elsie's was the hand that was drawn roughly away. "I don't wish to shake hands; I don't wish to make friends," she said obstinately. "I could *never* trust a girl that has acted the way Kitty has to-night. I shan't quarrel, but I would rather have nothing more to do with her."

For an instant Kitty sat as if stunned, the color all gone from her face and an expression in her eyes like that of a hurt child; then with a rush the angry blood dyed her cheeks scarlet, and she sprang to her feet. "Don't you worry, you'll never be asked again if *I* c'n help it," she cried furiously, her voice shaking, her lips quivering. "I didn't beg you to be my friend; 'twas you that came after me and just tormented me till I gave in to be friends with you. Couldn't trust me, indeed! You'll never get the chance, I c'n tell you! I wouldn't be your friend again if you should go down on your

knees an' beg me to, for I *despise* you! Talk about Friendly girls! Bah! I'm sick of 'em, an' I'm done with 'em too!"

"Oh Kitty! *Kitty!* my dear little girl!" reproachfully exclaimed her Associate; but regardless of the pleading voice, and evading the eager hands that would have detained her, Kitty flew out of the room, slamming the door violently behind her.

In vain did Miss Ashton talk with Elsie, and reason and plead; in her angry pride she was like a rock. "I don't want to be friends with her again," she said, "and I'm not going to be. I won't quarrel with her, Miss Ashton, but I don't want *ever* to speak to her again." And when Miss Ashton reminded her of her eager desire to help Kitty, and of the great change which love for her had wrought in Kitty, Elsie's answer was, "Yes, and this is all the thanks I've got for my pains! My father'll say 'served me right for taking up with such as she.' I'm sorry you're disappointed, Miss Ashton, but I *couldn't ever* be friends with Kitty again. I'll try not to bear her any malice, though she's in-

sulted me terrible to-night; but as for being friends—that's impossible. I might as well tell the truth, you know."

"Did you say nothing to hurt Kitty's feelings? didn't you provoke her in any way? was the fault *all* on her side? Oh, my dear, I *am* disappointed! Had it been Kitty who acted in this hard, un-Christlike way, poor, little, quick-tempered Kitty, who for years has had no father or mother, no home, and who from childhood has been exposed to the worst of influences, I could not so much have wondered; but that you, a Friendly girl of long standing, a Communicant, a *Christian*, should refuse forgiveness to one who has been your close friend, surprises me and grieves me to my very heart! Oh! Elsie, if you refuse forgiveness here how shall you expect it at the Last Day, when you may be called upon to answer for Kitty's soul? Don't you know that we are keepers one of the other in this world? Kitty is your charge, your responsibility, and you cannot let her drop in this way."

Again that wave of color spread over Elsie's face. "I am very sorry I have grieved and dis-

appointed you," she said, "sorry I am so hard; but I can't help it. I didn't make my own nature, and I can't help it." And that was all she would say.

Kitty did not appear in the Bible Class on the following Sunday, nor for many successive Sundays. When Miss Ashton went to see her and urged her return, Kitty said, "Best cross my name off your roll, Miss Ashton, for I might as well tell you I ain't comin' again. 'Tain't you —you've been awful good to me"—with a winsome grace she laid her Associate's hand against her cheek for a moment—"but I couldn't come there an' sit quietly in the same class with *her* Sunday after Sunday—*I couldn't!* I'd just get ravin' mad an' misbehave myself, an' that'd be worse 'n stayin' away. Please don't ask me."

"My dear," said her friend warmly, "your name shall not be crossed off the roll, and I hope before very long to see you back in the class, and you and Elsie as good friends as ever."

A suspicious moisture clouded Kitty's bright eyes; but all she said was, with a little toss of

her head, "I ain't goin' to force myself on nobody that don't want me."

But in compliance with Miss Ashton's earnest request, and, perhaps, with a little lurking hope of her own, Kitty still came to the Friendly meetings. On these occasions Elsie and she perfectly ignored each other's presence. This was apparently no effort to Elsie, who sat and sewed or crocheted or embroidered as coolly and unconcernedly as if Kitty were not in existence—and only a seat or two from her. Kitty, however, could not take matters so indifferently. Though she laughed and talked a good deal, as if in the best of spirits, and tossed her head and made sharp little speeches to the girls, Miss Ashton knew she was not as light-hearted as she would have people think. She saw the wistful light that would creep into Kitty's eyes as they rested on Elsie's fair, cold face, and the pathetic droop of her mouth as evening after evening passed and Elsie made not the slightest advance.

After a while she began to lapse in her attendance, and finally stayed away altogether from the Friendly, declaring that she knew she wasn't

wanted there. "I don't mean that to you," she said to her Associate, "for you've always made me welcome, but there's others that I know just hates to see me, an' I ain't so badly off for friends that I'm willin' to keep on puttin' myself where I c'n be slighted."

And not all Miss Ashton's persuasion could move her from this resolve. She no longer came to any of the classes, and seemed to have dropped completely out of touch with all that only a few weeks before had made life so sweet to her.

Miss Ashton was careful to let Elsie know that Kitty had given up both the Bible Class and Friendly, but she made no comment on it—having failed in a second attempt to soften Elsie—and neither did Elsie.

The weeks rolled swiftly by and grim old winter retreated before the steady advance of spring. There was a delicious thrill in the air, Nature was waking up into new life and beauty, and preparing to deck herself in her fairest garb. Easter fell late that year, and as Elsie Heywood passed through the parks on her way to attend a Holy Week service in the old brown church, she

noticed the soft blueness of the sky, flecked here and there with tiny, fleecy clouds, the exquisite green of the new grass, and the springing plants around the fountains ; a little while more and the fine old elms and the shrubs would be in full leafage. Elsie loved the spring—usually it was to her the happiest time of the whole year—but she did not feel very happy to-day ; there was a troubled look on her face, and as she walked slowly along she was thinking deeply—thoughts which hurt and mortified her, which she had again and again put from her in the last few weeks, but which now refused to be set aside.

A brief note had called her to Miss Ashton a few evenings before to find that lady making hurried preparations to leave the city in obedience to a telegraphic message from a relative who was ill. "I hope to be back in time for us all to have our early Communion together on Easter morning," she said, "but should I be detained over Sunday, give my best love to the girls, and explain my absence. Ask them to, and do you, pray for me at that service, and wherever I may be you may be sure that I shall

be thinking of and praying for my dear class." Then she had added, very seriously, "Elsie, I am going to leave a solemn responsibility with you, which I pray God you may be able to fulfil; one of my girls—one of your classmates and a Friendly girl—has not been with us for some time. I could not persuade her to come, but I have managed to pay her a little visit at her place of business almost every week, so that she should feel I still considered her as belonging to us. On calling, as usual, two days ago I was informed that our girl had been sent away the week before. Yesterday I went to her home address, hoping to find her there, but she was gone. Elsie, do you know why?"

Elsie's head was turned away from her Associate; she was twisting her glove nervously. "No," she said in a constrained voice.

"Because," went on Miss Ashton, "because she had no money to pay for her board; they—the people that kept the house—had turned her out. Times are hard, Elsie; work is difficult to get; that girl, your classmate, your fellow-member—a Friendly girl—may in this great city be

without a home or food or a friend to-day. Do you know who she is, Elsie?"

"Yes," answered Elsie unsteadily, brushing away with her glove the tear that ran down her cheek.

"It was my intention to have hunted her up this week, from place to place, until I found her," said Miss Ashton, "but my sister's illness calls me away, so I leave the matter in your hands as a solemn trust. I have noticed a great change in Kitty since that night when you two quarrelled, and for such a trifle! Oh Elsie! the gentleness and ladylike ways that she had gained are all gone, and she is rough and loud and wild again, and, I am afraid, reckless. Look for her at once—to-morrow; don't rest until you find her, and we'll get something for her to do—only find her, will you, Elsie?"

And then at last Elsie's hard heart had melted, and with the tears running down her face she had cried out, "I will. Oh! Miss Ashton, I will. I will begin to look for Kitty to-morrow."

True to her word, she had begun her search

the morning after Miss Ashton left the city ; but four days had passed, and to-day Elsie had to acknowledge with a heavy heart that she was no nearer to finding Kitty than she had been when she first began.

She had gone from place to place where she knew Kitty was in the habit of visiting, but without success. No one seemed to know anything of the girl. Conscience was now fully awake, and looking back over her conduct to her friend, Elsie's heart smote her, and she was bitterly ashamed.

Slipping into a dark corner of the dusky old church, she prayed that afternoon with an earnestness and humility that she had never known before. It was as she came out of church, comforted and strengthened by the service and the rector's helpful discourse, that two girls passed her talking, and she caught the words "Kitty Farrell." Elsie knew them, and in an instant had pounced upon them. "Oh ! girls," she cried breathlessly, "do you know where Kitty Farrell's living now ? Do give me her address ; I want to see her about something, and she's moved from where she used to be."

"Is she working?" She asked when she had learned the address.

"Well, she goes out mornin's when I does—that's the way I come to see her—but Emma here, who ain't workin', says she's home aft'-noons; we was just wond'rin' what she was doin'. She's awful snippy an' ac's like she don't know us or we'd go to see her. I thought you an' she wasn't talkin'," with a suspicious glance at Elsie. But with a merry laugh and good-by, Elsie was off.

She could hardly wait for the next afternoon to come, and by four o'clock she was standing in the narrow, ill-smelling hallway of the miserable tenement where Kitty had a room. In answer to her inquiry for Miss Farrell, a tired-looking woman with a baby in her arms said she "didn't know nobody livin' there by that name onless 'twas Bryant's new boarder, which was top floor, back."

So up and up went Elsie, stumbling along in the darkness until she reached the "top floor, back." Here she knocked, and in obedience to a prompt and vigorous "Come in!" opened the

door and stepped into the room with her heart beating like a sledge-hammer. The furniture was of the poorest, and was chiefly conspicuous by its absence. Kitty sat on a broken chair by the window sewing some cheap yellow lace on a soiled light blue dress. "Hullo!" she said, glancing carelessly over her shoulder. "Who're you? What d'you want?" Then as she recognized Elsie she rose quickly from her seat with a nervous little "Oh!" But before Elsie could speak she rallied, and added roughly, "What've you come for, I'd like to know? What d'you want? I'm busy this afternoon, an' I ain't got time to waste on strangers."

While she was speaking, Elsie noticed that she had grown very much thinner, and that her pretty color was almost all gone. "Don't call me a stranger, Kitty," she said slowly; she had to speak slowly to keep her voice steady. "I've come to ask you to forgive me and to be my friend again."

"Oh, ho! I see." Kitty put her hands on her hips and looked curiously at the tall girl before her. "I see; so you c'n have another

chance to insult me like you did before, eh? Le' me see; I cheated, I wasn't to be trusted; I wasn't fit to be the friend of such as you. Well, I'm the same person I was then, you know; I ain't changed one bit 'cept it's that I'm worse; so why should you want me now any more'n then? To make a fool of me again? No, you *don't*, Miss Elsie Heywood! I ain't doin' that sort of thing twice; one slap in the face 's enough for me. Now, if you're through, I wish you'd quit—leave—clear out; you understand what that comes to, I guess. I s'pose you've heard 'bout some people's room bein' better 'n their company; well, I've work to do."

Her tone was insulting. Elsie's face was getting red, but she leaned quietly against the closed door. "I don't blame you for feeling mad with me, Kitty," she said humbly; "I know I deserve it, but when I tell you I'm *awfully* sorry for the way I acted and spoke to you, and ask you to forgive me and be friends again, won't you do it? 'Tisn't easy for me to come here and tell you this" (with a catch in her voice), "but I've done it because I wanted you to know I

was really sorry, and wanted to be friends. *Won't* you make up? Won't you, Kitty?" She reached out her hand and laid it entreatingly on the other girl's arm.

But Kitty threw off her touch with a scornful gesture. "No, I will *not!*" she flashed out angrily. "I ain't goin' to be picked up an' pu' down accordin' to your freaks, me lady, an' you needn't think it. Get out of my room, d'you hear me; get out!"

She flew at Elsie and tried to push her aside to open the door, but Elsie caught her hands and held them, not unkindly, but firmly. "Kitty," she said earnestly, in that calm, determined tone that Kitty knew of old, "I'm not going out of this room till you make friends with me, if I have to stay all night. Miss Ashton knows I've come, and I was to tell you with her love that she was praying for us to be friends again. Won't you do it for *her* sake?"

But Kitty's mood had changed; snatching away her hands she darted to the window, and bringing over the broken-backed chair, offered it to Elsie with mock politeness. "If you're

goin' to stay so long, why, you might 's well be comf'table ; *do* take a seat," she urged. "You'll have a good while to wait, you know. In the mean time, since I didn't invite you, I'll go on with my work. You see, necktie makin' is gone up—the forelady sassed me, an' as I ain't takin' imperdence from nobody, why, I give her as good 's she sent, an' they bounced me. So for that reason, bein's I couldn't get work nowhere, I've took to dancin' for a livin'—"

"No, *no!* oh, *no!* you're not in earnest," Elsie broke in sharply, bending forward and throwing out her hands in protest. "You *never* would do such a thing—you, a Friendly girl!"

"*What* did you say—a '*Friendly* girl'? What's that?" asked Kitty with an air of great surprise. "'Deed, then, I *am* goin' to dance—I begin to-morrow night. That's what I'm trimmin' up me blue dress for. 'Tain't very stylish, but t'others are round the corner—pawnshop—had to, you know," as a groan broke from Elsie's lips—"*had* to have somethin' to eat. But I'll have loads o' money now soon's I begin to dance. It's the skirt dance that's all the rage

"She danced about the room, humming a popular air."

now. Tra la la, tra la, la, la, la !" she sang, and catching up her skirts on each side like a little child, she danced around the room, humming a popular air.

Elsie was so shocked, so grieved that her lips began to quiver, and tears rushed to her eyes. "Oh, you must not, you *shall not* do this dreadful thing," she cried, advancing to Kitty with her arms outstretched. "Come home with me and stay as long as you like ; you'll be *very* welcome—"

But like a flash Kitty had the door open and was out in the narrow hall.

"Now," she said in a low, determined voice, "*you've* got to go, or *I* will. Just leave my room this minute an' go where you belong, or *I'll* go—as I am, 'thout hat or coat—an' walk the streets all night rather'n stay here with you. Come, make your choice *quick!*" She stood with her hands on the rickety old banister, ready to dash down the stairs at a moment's notice. Her eyes were glittering and hard, her lips curved angrily, defiance was expressed in her whole attitude.

Slowly and sadly Elsie came out and began descending the stairs; tears were on her cheeks, and her voice shook as she said, "I couldn't have believed that you would treat me so, Kitty."

"Couldn't you?" answered Kitty dryly. "Well, you know it now." She stood and watched Elsie down the first and second flights, then went in her room and slammed the door.

Slowly Elsie went from step to step with leaden feet and a heart that was full of despair and self-accusations. Could this hard, unforgiving girl be the frank, loving little Kitty that had always been so ready to give in? Was *she* answerable for the dreadful change? Had her wicked, un-Christlike behavior influenced Kitty for evil? Was she responsible for this soul that was going so far astray? Miss Ashton had said so. What *could* she do to keep Kitty?

A disheartening consciousness of her own helplessness oppressed the usually self-reliant girl; an awful sense of utter failure overwhelmed her. Pausing in the dark hallway, she leaned her folded arms against the wall and

buried her face in them; a faint moan broke from her lips—could she do *nothing* more? "O God! O dear Christ! *help* me to save Kitty!" she implored. It was the prayer of a desperate human soul for another human soul in desperate need, and swift came the answer of Divine Love.

A new strength and hopefulness revived Elsie; with a little cry of joy she turned and sped softly up the stairs to Kitty's door, and stood there a moment in breathless silence, listening. Then very quietly she opened the door and looked in.

Flat on the floor lay a little figure with extended arms, and feet that beat the air like those of an angry child; from side to side rolled a curly, dishevelled head, with the bitter cry, "Oh, she's gone! she's gone! I'll never, *never* see her again. Oh, she's *gone!*"

Down upon the floor went another figure, and swiftly strong, loving arms encircled Kitty and held her in a warm embrace, while a glad, eager voice cried again and again, "Indeed I've *not* gone. Oh, my dear, I've *not* gone—nor am I going till I can take you with me. . . . I'll *not*

leave you again, no matter *what* you say to me."

As a mother would comfort a grieved child, with voice and touch, rocking her tenderly to and fro, Elsie soothed Kitty until her sobs died gradually away and she lay quiet; then she whispered, "Kitty, are we friends again, dear? Have you forgiven me?"

"Oh, long, *long* ago," cried Kitty tearfully; her slender arms tightened round Elsie's waist. "An' you?"

"Aye, from my very soul, with thankfulness to God for giving me the chance," answered Elsie fervently; then persuasively, "Kitty, you'll *not* dance in that horrid place?"

"'Deed, I won't then," returned Kitty with energy. "I hated it even while I was goin' to do it, an' now wild horses couldn't drag me there."

"And you'll go home with me presently, and stay till you can get something to do, won't you? I'm sure Miss Ashton 'll help you find a place. *Please*, Kitty!" pleaded Elsie.

There was a little silence, then Kitty sobbed

out, "Yes, I'll go with you; an' oh, Elsie, I *am* thankful to be friends, for all I was so mean to you."

"Won't Miss Ashton be glad!" Elsie said presently.

"An' I don't deserve it," whispered Kitty humbly.

"Nor I," answered Elsie; then she added softly, "We don't either of us deserve it; but God is good, Kitty, *very* good." And she laid her cheek lovingly against Kitty's flushed, tear-stained, happy little face.

"He was merely a tall stranger."

PHILIPINE'S LOVERS.

Maguire's restaurant was situated on a down-town street through which two or three lines of cars passed and repassed, and up and down whose sidewalks a steady stream of people tramped from early morn till late at night. Though by no means first class, the restaurant was clean, the food fairly good for the price charged ; and the waiter girls had not many idle moments at their disposal during the twelve—sometimes sixteen—hours that made up their working day. As Philipine Haffner told her Associate at one of the Girls' Friendly meetings, "A person's just got to hustle, Miss Ashton, to wait on all them hungry people, and keep 'em satisfied."

The hours were very long and the work was "wearing," but the girls were thankful, in

those hard times, to have any employment at all, and especially thankful was Philipine, or "Peenie," as she was generally called. Her mother was "housekeeper" of the tenement in which they lived—that is, she cleaned the halls, filled the lamps, cleared off the sidewalks, rented the rooms, settled disputes between the tenants, kept the peace, saw that no one took "French leave" (went off without paying rent), and was generally responsible for all that occurred on the premises. And in payment for these services she was allowed—no money, but the use of two small rooms on the ground floor rent free. All living expenses—food, clothes, light and fuel—came out of what Philipine and fourteen-year-old Otto could earn. Years before the father had slipped out of existence and been laid to rest in the cemetery.

But Mrs. Haffner was a delicate woman; every now and then her strength gave out, and she had to go to bed in the little, dark, stuffy closet that was Philipine's and her sleeping-room, and lie there for two and three weeks at a time. Then Philipine did her own and her mother's

work as far as she could, often rising at four o'clock in the morning so as to get the cleaning done, and breakfast cooked, and the two small rooms and mother in order before she left for Maguire's. With that ready sympathy and kindliness which the poor invariably display to each other in times of trouble, the neighbors—already overweighted with work and care of their own—"looked in" on the sick woman during the day and did for her what they could.

Sickness brings expense, and at these times Philipine was more than thankful for her place in the restaurant. The pay was small, but it was steady; and though it ceased when she stayed away, still it was a great deal to feel sure of employment from day to day, and that she thought she was, for the "customers" and even rough, domineering Maguire himself appeared to like her. In fact, it would have been difficult not to like Philipine. In spite of all the hard work and care which had been crowded into her nineteen years, she was sweet-natured and merry—quick-tempered, perhaps, but with a bright smile and a friendly word that won her the

good-will of her companions. Even Katie Laffan, the "crank" of the establishment, admitted that "if all 'Friendly' girls was like Peenie Haffner, the institootion would amount to somethin'."

And Philipine was so pretty. Her round little face was delicately tinted, her eyes dark blue, with heavy curling lashes, and with an expression in them so clear and honest that one felt instinctively she was to be trusted. Her dress, no matter how shabby, was always neat and fitted her trim little figure well, and her shining black hair was smoothly arranged. Philipine was quick, too, and that and her obliging manners made her a great favorite with the people who frequented Maguire's. Most of these were young men, clerks in the neighboring stores and offices; and many were the attempts that were made to carry further their acquaintance with the pretty waitress. But Philipine would favor no one more than the other. She undoubtedly enjoyed the attentions paid her, but she was too busy to give much thought and too sensible to attach any importance to them. With all her fun

there was a dignity about her that kept the presumptuous at a distance.

In her way—and it was a nice way—Philipine was proud. When the other girls began to talk about the men who came to the restaurant as possible "fellers" and "beaux," she'd rear her pretty head and say with a merry laugh, "Catch me pickin' up a feller here! We don't know a thing about any of these men. They come in here, an' while they're eatin' they wink an' smile an' try to flirt with us—just to pass the time; they don't really care for us; they might all be married men with children for all we can tell. An' as to goin' *out* with 'em an' having 'em walk home with me—no, *sir!* *I*'ve got to know something 'bout the feller I goes out with."

"Highty tighty! don't we bantams crow loud!" cried Katie Laffan scornfully one day, shaking her dish-rag at Philipine, while a few of the girls muttered something that sounded like "putting on airs."

"'Deed, then, it isn't airs," Philipine said warmly. "As Miss Ashton told us the other

night, we girls 've a right to be just as proud an' perticular 'bout our beaux as the rich girls. She says, 'Girls, be just as nice an' ladylike, an' expect just as much respect from the men you meet, at home or abroad, as if you owned half New York, and you'll get it. For,' says she, 'men take you at your own valuation; if you make yourself cheap to 'em they'll treat you cheap, an' if you let 'em see you're a real womanly girl an' respect yourself, they'll respect you every time.' 'Course those ain't exactly her words, but it's what they mean. Now, didn't she say that, Carrie?" setting down the plate she was wiping and turning to a rosy-cheeked Friendly girl who stood near.

"Yes, *she* did," replied Carrie with an emphatic nod of her head. "An', what's more, she said besides that what we could give to our husbands was just the same as the richest girl in the land could give—no more 'n no less—an' that was real true love an' a good name. An' not to go round laughin' loud on the streets and flirtin' with the fellers, but to just be above that sort of thing, an' then when the right one come

along we'd be all the better wife to him. That was an awful nice talk, Peenie, wasn't it ?''

" Well, I ain't under no Miss Ashton's rule,'' said Emmie Meyers, tossing her head, " an' I'll flirt if I feel like it—so now !''

But all the same, what Philipine and Carrie said had its weight, for they were both favorites with their mates, and before very long the waiter girls at Maguire's got the reputation of being nicer, of a higher class, than in any of the other restaurants on that street.

Philipine had admirers outside of the restaurant as well, and two of them—Ferd Walters and Hans Bierck—were very much in earnest. Ferd was a clerk in the little drug-store at the end of Philipine's block ; he parted his hair in the middle, cultivated a small mustache, wore what Otto called " dandy" neckties, and was particular about the length of his cuffs, the height of his collars, and the exact amount of handkerchief that showed above his breast-pocket. He played the flute and sang all the popular songs of the day. Ferd prided himself on being a favorite with the girls ; and just as

soon as he got a little more salary, he intended to ask Philipine to marry him. He did not for a moment doubt that she would be glad to accept him. What would become of her mother after that—for he did not intend to support both—did not trouble him in the least. In the mean time he went to service every Sunday evening and waited outside the old brown church to walk home with Philipine and her friend, Carrie McIntyre.

Though secretly Philipine was flattered by these attentions, her heart was not touched in the least, and she was very saucy and independent with Ferd, more than once giving him the slip and going home alone, much to the surprise of Carrie, who thought Ferd "*grand*," and could not understand her friend's blindness to his fascinations.

Hans Bierck was a very different sort of person ; he was big and clumsy, and some people thought rather dull. Philipine objected most to his thick red wrists that no cuffs could hide, and to the shine on his broad German face. His father owned a number of wagons and horses

and did the "trucking" for several large business houses. He also owned his stables, over which he and his family lived. It was said that Mr. Bierck "had money," and reported that some day he intended setting Hans, who was the eldest son, up in the grocery business on his own account. There were some who thought Hans was very foolish to be dancing attendance on a girl as poor as Philipine, and who showed him so little favor, when it was well known that for the asking he might have Meta Peterson, whose father owned the largest bakery in the neighborhood. Hans's mother and sister also thought he might look higher for a wife, and sometimes made remarks to that effect. These remarks had no impression on Hans himself, unless it was to make him more than ever determined to win Philipine; but when they came to Philipine's ears she got very angry and took particular pains to snub the poor fellow on every occasion possible, as if it had been his fault.

Mrs. Haffner liked Hans; unlike Ferd, he did not ignore her in his calls at the house, and when every now and then, during her illnesses, a

package of good tea, or fresh eggs, or jars of jelly, or Liebig's Extract came from an unknown source, she was very careful not to confide to Philipine her suspicions as to the donor. She well knew that they would be promptly returned, or if too late for that, that "Mr." Bierck would be informed that "Miss" Haffner wished him to discontinue such gifts. Ordinarily they addressed each other as "Hans" and "Peenie," having, as Mrs. Haffner was wont to say plaintively, "knowed each odder since dey vas *dat* high," holding her hand about two feet from the floor.

Hans bore Philipine's snubbings patiently, and continued to come "to see the family;" and though he made no parade of his attentions, the feeling grew upon Peenie that his affection was something not easily to be turned aside, and that he would yet get his way. There had been a time when, in spite of her indignation at his family's remarks, Philipine might have been induced to marry Hans, even caring as little for him as she did; but now the mere thought of such a thing troubled and sometimes irritated her. The year and a half in which she had been

a Friendly girl had given her new thoughts, new feelings, and a fuller understanding of the true meaning and responsibility of marriage. Miss Ashton and her girls had had "talks" on that as well as other important subjects, and now Philipine felt, as she expressed it to herself, "that it would be wicked to marry Hans just to get out of Maguire's."

"I know he'd be good to mother," she said to herself one morning on her way to the restaurant, "an' if I was only sure I could love him I'd take Hans to-morrow. I s'pose then I wouldn't mind his big red hands and homely face and his clumsy ways so much."

Maguire's was a good hour's walk from her house, and as it happened that none of the other girls lived in the direction that she did, Philipine had her tramp back and forth alone. At first she had thought this hard, for there was not much to see at six o'clock in the morning, nor many people stirring, and a number of the evenings were dark and dreary, but gradually she grew to look forward to and enjoy the two quiet hours each day. In this time she straightened out

knotty home questions and unconsciously got fresh courage for the future; thought over Miss Ashton's weekly "talk," and sometimes studied her hymn for the following Sunday, for she was a member of Miss Ashton's Bible Class as well as her Friendly Circle.

On this particular morning Philipine's face looked very serious; this was one of mother's "bad spells," and besides, having been up with her during the night, there had been much to accomplish before she could be left. And now she would be alone all day except when Mrs. McFeldy, the next-door neighbor, could spare a few moments from her washing to look in and give the sick woman her medicine. "I hate to leave you, mother dear," Philipine had said, bending down to kiss the drawn, white face on the pillow in the stuffy closet.

Her mother had answered wearily, "Eef you vould marrys Hans, den you vould not haf to leafe me," which Philipine knew was true.

All the way down-town she brooded over the matter without being able to arrive at the conclusion that would have pleased her mother.

"I'll work my fingers to the very bone for mother; but I *can't* marry Hans, an' that's all there is about it," she said to herself almost vehemently; then as a new thought occurred to her, "I wonder if Miss Ashton could help me get a place in O'Rell's? I'm sure I'd get more wages there." Here she turned into the restaurant, and was soon too busy to think of anything or any one save "tables" and "customers."

That was an unusually busy day, and it was nearly three o'clock before the rush of hungry people at Maguire's began to abate in the slightest. Philipine had as much as she could do to supply the needs of those who had filled the seats around her table as fast as they were vacated, and she felt inclined to answer sharply when, as she sat resting for a few moments, Carrie McIntyre stopped, with a large, heavily laden tray, to ask persuasively, "Say, Peenie, will you wait on that man that's just come to my table by the door? I'm that rushed I'm almost wild, an' them people I'm waiting on looks hungry enough to eat me if they can't get anything else. You ain't doin' nothing; come on, will you?"

"All right, I will," Philipine answered after a little unwilling pause—she was *so* tired! So tired indeed that she scarcely glanced at the stranger as she asked, "What'll you have?" before going to the back of the room to have the order filled.

But Mark Hambden had all an artist's keen appreciation of beauty, and he noticed with delight Peenie's delicately tinted, flower-like face, the blue eyes heavy from her sleepless night, her pretty, tired mouth, and the poise of her well-shaped, shining dark head. Even her small hands, roughened with labor, but slender and deft as she waited on him, came in for a share of his attention.

Mark had not been to Maguire's before—he generally lunched at Eldridge's on Broadway; but this day he had business in Brooklyn and had gone half way to the ferry before he remembered that he had had nothing to eat. Stopping the car opposite the cleanest-looking restaurant in the crowded street, he had gone in and taken the only seat he saw vacant, and then Philipine had come forward to wait upon him.

In a quiet way he tried to attract her attention, to win a smile by his remarks, but failed signally. Peenie was tired and out of sorts, and to her that day he was merely a tall blond stranger, better dressed and a little more considerate than the majority of the hungry people whom she had been serving since morning. Had she never seen him again, this one meeting would have left no impression whatever on her mind or heart. But after this he came again and again, becoming more and more interested each time, and exerting himself to win some response from Philipine.

Had he been remonstrated with at this stage of the acquaintance, Mark would have declared that his sole object was to cheer the drooping spirits of the little waitress, and to enjoy the sight of her beauty—he was supremely selfish, and recognized no law save his own pleasure.

Philipine's spirits were indeed at a low ebb during the first few weeks that followed the day she met Mr. Hambden, for her mother was very ill. Between the anxiety and the immense amount of work she was trying to accomplish

each day, poor Peenie was losing both heart and strength. Miss Ashton and the deaconesses were doing all that was in their power for poor Mrs. Haffner, who positively refused to be sent to a hospital; but the work of the house and some of the night watching fell upon Philipine besides her daily occupation at Maguire's—which had to go on, in order to bring in the money. In after years, looking back upon these weeks, they seemed to Philipine like a hideous nightmare, the bare recollection of which brought a shudder.

The merry laughter, the saucy words were hushed, and it was a very silent Philipine that flitted about Maguire's, waiting on her customers. Mother had always been delicate, but death had never been so near her before, and Peenie's heart was heavy within her at thought of the sorrow and loneliness that might lie before Otto and herself. In vain the girls tried to cheer her; her little round face lengthened into an oval and the pretty color in her cheeks grew more and more delicate.

It was in these days of trouble that Philipine

first began to make a difference between Mr. Hambden and the other men who came to the restaurant. Before that he had been to her merely one of the many whom she served ; but now his daily inquiries about her mother, his warmly expressed sympathy, and his kindly interest in her affairs set him apart from the others, and gradually she came to regard him as a friend. Falling under a spell which had charmed many beside herself, she began to look forward to the hour of his appearing—for he now came daily—and to be sorry when he went away. Mark's attentions were so quietly rendered as to escape the notice of Philipine's companions, and so entirely free from all that offended and set her on her guard against the younger men who had tried to win her favor, that the little waitress never for one moment classed him with them. His courteous consideration soothed her and led her on to talk, and without her being at all aware of it, the astute lawyer soon knew all the details of the girl's simple life—not only of the sick, patient little German mother, but of Otto and Ferd, and Hans as well, and of Peenie's beloved

Associate. Most of this information was not given in the crowded restaurant amid the clatter and din of tongues and dishes, but during the homeward walk of an evening when, under Mr. Hambden's guidance, they wended their way together through unfrequented streets to within a few blocks of Philipine's home, where her new friend always left her.

This companionship in her evening walks had at first come about—apparently—by accident; unexpected meetings on the street, kindly inquiries made as they walked together for a block or two, and then a courteous good-evening as Mr. Hambden went his way. Philipine was rather shy at first, but that soon wore away under the charm of her companion's voice and manner, and then she began to feel very much flattered at the interest Mr. Hambden showed in her—that he, a gentleman, rich, refined, educated, should take the trouble to come out of his way to walk with her filled her with the same sort of pride, only in a stronger degree, that she had felt at Ferd's attentions. But he wasn't to be named in the same breath with Ferd, she said to her-

self, as Mr. Hambden talked to her of the many wonders he had seen in his travels at home and abroad, of the pictures and beautiful scenery he had enjoyed, of the books he had read. He stirred her imagination, he quickened her mind, and gave her new thoughts as no one save Miss Ashton had ever done.

When these walks together began to be a regular thing, Peenie's conscience troubled her a good deal. She remembered very distinctly the rule that she had, at Miss Ashton's suggestion, laid down for herself—not to allow any attentions of that sort from the men she met at Maguire's—and day after day she tried to get up enough courage to tell Mr. Hambden that she would rather he did not walk with her of an evening. Had he been at all "flirty and forward like the others" she'd have spoken out fast enough, she told herself, but his behavior was so entirely different from that—so polite and respectful, even deferential—that she felt as if she *couldn't* say what she knew she really ought to. She worried over it until Mr. Hambden remarked one evening in a seemingly casual way

that he was an exceedingly busy man, and only gave her these hours of companionship because he felt so much sympathy for her in her mother's illness, and because he knew that the complete change of thought which his conversation afforded her would send her home more cheerful and better able to take up the duties which awaited her there than if she walked alone and brooded over her own sad thoughts. This seemed to Philipine so very kind that she felt ashamed to offer any objection, and made up her mind she would let matters go on as they were for the present. "There's exceptions to every rule," she said to herself, "an' Mr. Hambden ain't like the rest of them. By-'n-by, when mother's well, 'n I can go to the Friendly again, I'll tell her an' Miss Ashton all about it. Mother won't make no fuss, I'm pretty sure; an' Miss Ashton 'll understand how it come to happen."

But in her inmost heart Philipine felt, though she would not admit it, that neither her mother nor her Associate would approve of what she was doing; and when she unexpectedly came face to face with Hans one evening, on her home-

ward way, she was thankful, even in the sudden fear which fell upon her, that Mr. Hambden had left her on the block below.

"*Mother!*" she exclaimed quickly, catching hold of Hans's sleeve. "Have you come to tell me mother's *dead?*"

"Why, *no*," Hans answered, taking the hand off his arm and holding it tight for a moment as they fell into step, "but she ain't no better. Peenie, I've just been to the house, an' I made up my mind I'd take a little more time from the store an' come to meet you. I wan' to have a talk with you, an' there ain't no chance for that to the house now."

He paused as if expecting an answer; but Philipine only said, "Oh!" in a non-committal tone of voice; then she added a little shortly, "If mother's no worse I can't see what you're leaving your work to come an' talk to me about. I must get home, I ain't got no time to listen."

She pulled her hand from his hold and quickened her steps, but Hans kept pace with her. "'Tain't no use actin' this way, Peenie," he said, with a new note of determination in his

voice. "I've walked down to meet you on purpose to say something, an' I'm bound to say it, so you might's well listen." He hesitated, then again caught Philipine's hand and held it fast. "Oh! Peenie," he said entreatingly, "you know very well what I want. Marry me, won't you, an' let me take care of the ole lady? No, I ain't goin' to let it go," as the hand in his tried to get loose. "I ain't much on the talk; but, oh, my dear, I've loved you since we was boy an' girl together, an' I'd be good to you an' yours if you'll only marry me. It breaks my heart to see you wearin' yourself out with all the work an' sickness in the house, an' everything hard on you, when I'm ready an' longin' to take care of you. Now, *listen*, Peenie"—this persuasively, as she tried to interrupt him—"we'll get married right away—there ain't no call for us to wait—an' we'll hire a nice little flat—one o' them new ones that's just been fixed up on our block—an' we'll take the ole lady to live with us; she's too weakly to keep on at that housekeepin', an' she c'n get well at her ease, an' Otto c'n live with us too, an' we'll all be as

happy's the day's long. Say, will you?—will you, Peenie? I'll be orful good to you, dear, an' you c'n be boss if you want to—I won't mind 's long as I got you."

Hans's honest face was redder than ever, his voice shook with intense feeling, and he dropped Philipine's hand to slip his fingers round her arm and draw her nearer to him as they walked along.

But Philipine pulled herself hastily away. "'Tain't no use your sayin' any more, Hans," she said decidedly. "I don't love you, an' I ain't goin' to marry any man I don't love. An' as to worryin' 'bout me—it's very kind of you to take that interest—I'm not sayin' it ain't, but I ain't killed myself with work yet, an' I ain't goin' to, an' Otto an' I c'n take care of mother."

"I don't mind if you don't love me just yet if you'll only marry me and give me the right to take care of you and the mother," urged Hans humbly. "I know you're the prettiest girl in this ward, an' that you're ten times smarter'n I am, an' that there's other fellers wants you. Oh, I know it well—you needn't blush; but I

tell you, Peenie," with a world of entreaty in his voice, "there ain't nobody in God's world that loves you like I do—nobody that'd be so patient 'n take such good care of you an' yours. There's the mother lyin' down there, alone good part of the time, 'n maybe wantin' for things—'tain't your fault, my darling, don't think I'm blamin' you," as Peenie turned angrily on him, "but sickness does cost a pile of money—an' I'd never let her want no more'n I would you. Why can't you take me, Peenie? Oh!" his big fingers clinching on Philipine's little hand as a new thought struck him, "are you in love with that dood Ferd Walters, or any of them fellers? Is *that* the reason you won't take me? Are you in love with anybody? *Are* you? *Are* you? *Are* you?" with a vehement shake of her hand each time he repeated the question.

He almost gasped in his agitation. Philipine had never seen him so excited. "No, *no!*" she answered impatiently, "I ain't in love with *anybody.*" The ring of honesty in her voice reassured Hans. "For goodness sake! I ain't bound to marry you if I don't *want* to, am I?

Leave me go; I won't listen to another word out of you;'' and wrenching herself free from him, she ran swiftly down a side street and disappeared in the darkness, leaving poor Hans standing motionless, with an awful sense of desolation in his heart.

If Hans was unhappy so was Philipine in the next few days that followed—more unhappy, she thought then, than she had ever been in her life. In the first place, the doctor that Miss Ashton had brought to attend Mrs. Haffner told Philipine that should her mother recover sufficiently to rise from her bed of sickness, which was still doubtful, she would never again be able to do any hard work, as her hold on life would be so slight a one as to be liable to break at any moment. As Philipine listened her heart grew heavy and lay like a stone in her bosom. Oh, what would life be worth to herself and Otto without the dear, patient, loving little German mother! Then Mrs. Haffner missed Hans, who had been most constant in his inquiries for her. Lying in her little stuffy bedroom, often in great

pain and weariness of spirit, the sound of her favorite's loudly whispered hope that she was better had each day given her a certain amount of comfort. And when her close questioning drew from Philipine a reluctant confession of what had happened, she was grieved to a degree that frightened the girl, who knew that agitation was bad for her. And to add to this, when neither at the usual luncheon hour nor in the evening did Mr. Hambden appear, Philipine felt as if her cup of sorrow were indeed full. She was deeply hurt at his dropping the acquaintance so abruptly ; she feared she had offended him in some way, though how she could not imagine ; and she sorely missed the companionship and interest that had cheered and lightened her long, dreary evening walks. As the week dragged slowly on poor Peenie's spirits sank lower and lower, until one day, after an unusually fatiguing "noon" hour in the restaurant, she broke down and cried bitterly, almost hysterically.

"O Peenie ! don't cry, your mother *will* get well." "Poor girl ! it's meself that pities a orphan." "Keep up your courage, Peenie ;

don't cry ; your mother ain't gorn yet, an' as long's there's life there's hope !" came from the girls as they crowded around her, with face and voice full of sympathy. Even Maguire said, "Pore gurl !" and made no objection when Carrie McIntyre begged to be allowed to do her own and Philipine's work until the latter had had her cry out and was equal to again facing the customers.

Carrie and Philipine were usually close friends, though it had seemed to Carrie lately as if they were drifting a little apart. On account of her mother's illness, Philipine had not, for some weeks, been able to attend either the Friendly meetings or the Sunday morning Bible Class ; and it was for the same reason, Carrie thought, that her friend had lately been so silent and preoccupied, and had thrown on her things and left the restaurant the very moment her time was up. She didn't blame Peenie for doing this—she was too devoted to her friend for that—but she did long for an opportunity to talk to her and tell her of something good which she was almost certain would soon be hers. It had been at first

a secret between Miss Ashton and herself, or she would have told it to Philipine a week before, when the plan was first thought of, and now with a delicate consideration she concluded not to tell her good fortune to Philipine in her present sorrowful condition. Next Friday evening she would visit her aunt, who lived on the east side, and as she walked down to Maguire's the next morning she would meet Philipine on her way and tell her the good news which all the girls would know by Saturday night. Meantime she hovered about Philipine at every spare moment, did as much of her day's work for her as her own occupation would allow of, and bade her friend good-night at the restaurant door, just a little hurt at Peenie's decided refusal to let her go part way home with her.

As Philipine walked slowly along, alone in the darkness, she felt utterly depressed, her natural buoyancy of temperament seemed to have entirely deserted her, and to her gloomy fancy, life presented but a dreary waste of years filled with an intense, unutterable sense of loss. Her physical condition had a good deal to do with this low

state of mind, the severe strain upon her, mentally and physically, of the past weeks having weakened her courage and obscured her common-sense. Although as quick-witted as most girls of her age and set, Philipine had yet in her nature a good deal of childlike simplicity ; she was quite unused to self-analysis ; and all that she realized now was, as she in her girlish exaggeration expressed it, that she was "tired out, body an' soul, an' would just like to lie down an' die."

As she passed through the little side street, a block or two from her home, just by the old dark church where Mr. Hambden had usually bidden her good-night, a tall figure stepped out of the shadow and came close to her side ; a voice that had grown very familiar lately said pleasantly, "Will you not say a word of welcome to a returned traveller ?"

Philipine's heart gave a tremendous leap that seemed to bring it into her throat ; her voice shook as she cried, "Oh ! *oh !*" catching her breath and throwing out her hands to meet his extended ones. She was so startled by the unex-

pected meeting, so unnerved, that she began to cry, and the next thing she knew, to her great surprise, Mr. Hambden's arm was around her, his hand was pressing her head against his shoulder, and his voice was whispering words of endearment in her ears—words that seemed like the sweetest music to poor, foolish Philipine. She showed no anger as with clumsy, honest Hans, no coquetry as with Ferd, but, in her overwhelming surprise, an outspoken wonder, a shy delight, a sweet humility that would have stirred all the honor and manliness of a noble nature, but which merely appealed to this man as a new sensation.

But not a doubt of his sincerity crossed Philipine's mind—in fact, only one thought was uppermost as, a few moments later, she sped homeward alone. "Oh," she whispered in a delighted, almost awe-struck tone, "to think that *he* is in *love* with *me!*" Then pressing her crossed hands upon her bosom, she lifted her happy eyes to heaven in a silent thanksgiving.

With all her efforts to appear as usual at home that night, Philipine's happiness shone out of her

eyes, it rang even in the hushed tone in which she spoke to the sick mother.

"You look like somet'ing gute haf happen, Peenie," said Mrs. Haffner, turning her weary, sleepless eyes on her daughter's radiant face as she bent over her with some medicine. "Aff you seen Hans?"

"No, mother dear," Philipine answered; "but I'm goin' to try an' quit worryin'. God'll take care of us, as Miss Ashton says, an' I'm goin' to trust Him."

How much easier it was to feel this now than it had been the night before! Philipine could have laughed aloud in her glee.

Mrs. Haffner's being a trifle better the next morning was a sufficient excuse to her companions at Maguire's for Philipine's bright face and cheerfulness, but hardly for the new loftiness in her manner that puzzled them all, and made Carrie more than content to wait until Saturday to tell her secret. Little did they dream that a sort of contempt for them and for her work in the restaurant had crept into foolish little Philipine's heart since the night before; and Hans came in

for a share. "To think I'd marry *him!* the great, clumsy thing!" Then after the day's work was over came the long, delightful walk home with the companion who met her so gladly and appeared to leave her so reluctantly. This evening, at Mr. Hambden's suggestion, they went a little out of their way and sat for a few minutes in the big park where the trees and shrubs were yet bare and dead in Winter's cold grasp; and again Philipine went home with a glad wonder in her heart. But it was not quite the ecstatic joy of the night before. Though carried away, fascinated by Mr. Hambden's attentions, which were so different from anything in her limited experience, Philipine had a strong, clear sense of right and wrong, and on this evening a vague feeling of uneasiness troubled her and would not be shaken off.

Mr. Hambden had told her that on Saturday he would again be obliged to leave town—"for a month, perhaps longer," he had said. Then seeing the startled, grieved look on Philipine's face (for she still had a keen recollection of those miserable hours only divided from her by one

short day), he had added, "Perhaps I'll take you with me. Will you go?"

"Oh, I'd *love* to," replied Peenie involuntarily; then lifting her honest eyes to his with an expression half wistful, half perplexed, she had said, "But there's mother. I couldn't leave her, you know. An' then—you haven't said—you haven't asked—" She stopped in confusion; a rush of vivid color swept over her face to the roots of her dark hair put smoothly back under her shabby hat, even to the tips of her pretty ears, and her eyes fell shyly before the grey ones that gazed so piercingly at her.

The owner of those grey eyes read her heart like the pages of an open book; as well as if she had spoken, he knew the words that trembled on her lips, and a faint, sarcastic smile stirred his mouth under the heavy mustache as he said, "Well, we can talk the matter over to-morrow evening, we needn't settle it now," and then had kept the conversation on other subjects until they parted.

But in thinking it over, somehow Philipine again got that uneasy feeling. What could he

have meant by her going away with him on Saturday? He knew how ill mother was; and he hadn't said anything about marrying her, though of course he must have meant that. She wished he *had* said it right out, even if she couldn't take him until mother got well. Hans had— Oh, bother Hans! How surprised they would all be at Maguire's when she told them, one of these days, how things were!

All through the next day Philipine's thoughts kept turning to the question which would probably be decided that evening. She had thrown off her uneasiness, and now had no doubt whatever of what it was that Mr. Hambden intended to propose. Hastily getting on her things, she bade the girls good-night and was out of the restaurant before any of the others were ready, for fear that some one should offer to walk with her. Mr. Hambden was in good spirits, and he soon infected Philipine with them. He talked a good deal and very fast, from one subject to the other, in a way that Philipine thought very wonderful and which confused her—"mixed her up," she would have said. Then suddenly, as

they stood in the shadow of the old church for a few minutes, he repeated his question of the night before and rapidly unfolded his scheme.

The street was too dark to show the startled horror that flashed into Philipine's face, but he felt her instinctive movement to leave him, and catching her hands detained her, while with the warmth of utterance, the flow of eloquence that had won him more than one difficult case in court, he tried to gain his point.

After one fierce, sharp refusal, Philipine stood as if turned to stone, rigid and silent, not one word could she utter ; but while Mr. Hambden talked with increasing vehemence her mind with curious insistence was going over and over a scene that had taken place not so very long ago, when another man had talked as vehemently, but oh, how differently ! Through her confused brain sentences floated deadening the words she did not wish to hear. "There's nobody that loves you like I do. Oh, marry me, Peenie, an' we'll take the ole lady to live with us an' she c'n get well at her ease. I'd never let her want no more'n I would you. Only marry me, dear."

These words drowned the other words that hurt her so, that she was trying not to listen to. Had Hans just said them? Was he behind her —come to help her?

Involuntarily Philipine turned her head to see. No one was there, but from the farther end of the street came the sound of a man's heavy approaching step. "Leave me go!" she cried in a sharp whisper, trying to get her hands loose, but without avail; and still he talked eagerly.

The footsteps were drawing nearer, and as the man passed under the gas-lamp on the other side of the street Philipine recognized him—it was *Hans!* Hans, with his coat on over his grocer's apron, with a parcel in his arms, and peering up at the houses for a number as he went along.

The sight of him roused Philipine. A sudden keen sense of bitter shame smote her. "I *must* go—I *will*," she cried angrily. "Leave me go, I tell you!" Just then the church-bell boomed out the hour—a deep, solemn toll that frightened Philipine and made Mr. Hambden start. "I'm goin' home," Philipine exclaimed;

with a mighty effort of will she threw his hands off, slipped from his detaining grasp, and was gone—racing down the street in the opposite direction to that in which Hans was coming.

With a smothered exclamation, Mr. Hambden turned on his heels and walked rapidly away.

Up and down the darkest streets, across and around the quiet, almost deserted park went Philipine like a wild creature, trying to walk herself into some semblance of composure before she went home, before mother's eyes fell on her, or before she questioned in her weak, gentle voice of this unusual lateness. She was shaking from head to foot as if with a nervous chill, and as she tramped back and forth and around the walks that were so familiar to her, Philipine passed through three distinct phases of feeling. First disappointment, intense, keen, sweeping; not until now did she realize all the wonderful hopes and ambitions that she had built up in the last two days—for mother, for Otto, for herself. And that *this* should be the end of all those weeks of happy companionship! She had been so glad, so proud of the respect, the deference

(though she did not know it by that name) which he had paid her, the love which he had expressed for her. And to have it all end like this! Oh! was it her fault? Had she been free, familiar in *any* way? Back to her mind came Carrie's quotation of Miss Ashton's remarks: "Men take you at your own valuation; if you make yourself cheap to 'em, they'll treat you cheap." How often *she* had reminded the girls of that! Ah! that was the trouble—she had preached to others what she herself had refused to practise! This was her punishment.

Then suddenly a great wave of anger swept over her; the angry tears poured down her cheeks and dropped on the front of her coat; she stamped her foot on the frozen ground and clinched her hands. "I hate him! I *hate* him!" she cried, throwing her arms up wildly to the same quiet sky to which two nights before she had offered a thanksgiving.

And then slowly her anger died, and another feeling moved her, as keen as her disappointment, as strong as her anger and twice as dangerous. The time would come when, with supreme

thankfulness, Philipine would know that this was not the love of her life; but all that she realized now was a desperate ache in her heart, a hopeless longing for lost happiness that she thought she *could* not endure. And then came the real hour of temptation.

With her arm on the back of one of the rough park benches and her head bowed upon it, Philipine fought a desperate battle with her own heart —love, happiness—aye, but with what she *knew* to be a black and awful sin—*could* happiness last with sin? On the other side there was Maguire's, perhaps for all the rest of her life—toil, drudgery, poverty—how she loathed it all to-night! *without* that love that seemed so much to her. Ah! but here were honor, purity, goodness, self-respect—all that had grown to mean so much to her since she had become a Friendly girl. Over and over, and over and over it she went with a persistency that wearied her, but which she could not control.

Had this temptation come to Philipine two years before she might have been overcome by it; but Miss Ashton's teaching had fallen on

good ground, her prayers for her favorite scholar had been heard at the Throne of Grace. "Greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world," says St. John, and in that hour of fierce trial, all unable though she was to trace its workings, that which was within Philipine—the Spirit of God—was greater, stronger than that which was in the world—the spirit of Evil.

And by and by, slowly, and with the worn, spent feeling of one who has been in actual conflict, she arose and went her way home.

"O Peenie! mine *kinder*, vhere *haff* you peen? I vas mos' vild apout you," questioned Mrs. Haffner as her daughter came in.

"I'm awful sorry I'm that late," said Peenie. "I was kep', mother. I'll tell you 'bout it some other time; now I must get Otto's dinner." Saying a few words of apology for her lateness to the middle-aged woman that Miss Ashton had hired to come in for a few hours every day, Philipine let her go, and throwing off her coat and hat, proceeded to get supper for her hungry and impatient young brother, who wanted to go

right out. There were many things to be done about the rooms for the night, and Philipine went from one to the other with a fierce energy as if finding relief in the physical exercise. She had made her decision, and she meant to abide by it if she possibly could; but there was a hard, bitter feeling in her heart, a rebellion against the necessity for this decision, that made tense lines about the pretty mouth and gave a sharp ring to her voice.

"Vat iss de matter, my Peenie? tell de ole *mutter*," questioned the sick woman, catching Philipine's hand as she settled her for the night.

Oh, how Peenie longed to kneel down beside her and tell everything and be comforted! But she knew on what a frail thread her mother's life hung; she dared not get relief that way. "Don't worry 'bout me, mother; just get well, an' then you'll hear everything that's goin'. This'll keep till you're well. I ain't lost my place anyway, if that's what you're thinkin'. Now, go to sleep, dear, and I'll come too before very long. I want to read Miss Ashton's letter that Otto brought in." She kissed her mother

affectionately, then went into the other room—the sitting-room, dining-room, kitchen, and Otto's sleeping-room all in one—and by the light of the little kerosene lamp, opened and read her Associate's letter.

Its tender, loving lines fell on Philipine's sore heart like healing balm.

"I know, dear child," wrote Miss Ashton, "that you cannot be with us on Sunday morning; but we shall think of and pray for you, you may be sure. Though absent, I want you to feel yourself in touch with us, so I enclose the verse for our talk, 'For we have not a High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.' To me, this is one of the sweetest, most comforting verses in the Bible; and the hymn that I have copied for you on the enclosed sheet is one that I know you and all the girls are fond of, though all may not know the words by heart. I will mail my letter so that it shall reach you this evening, when you come home from business. If you are not too tired, dear, learn the verse and hymn before you go to bed, or, if you haven't time for that, read them over slowly and carefully; a line or

two may stay in your memory and be a comfort to you to-morrow, which I know is your long day at the restaurant. I am coming to see mother on Sunday afternoon; give her my love. Now, dear child, good-bye until the day after to-morrow. God bless and comfort and strengthen you.

"Your loving friend,

"ISOBEL ASHTON."

Philipine read the letter twice and the verse once, then she began the hymn. She was very fond of poetry and loved to study hymns, and the tune that went with this one was a great favorite of hers; but she had not thought very much about the words; now she read them slowly and softly to herself:

"In the hour of trial,
  Jesus, plead for me;
Lest by base denial
  I depart from Thee.
When Thou seest me waver,
  With a look recall;
Not for fear or favor
  Suffer me to fall."

Philipine caught her breath sharply and looked up with wide, startled eyes. What a new mean-

ing was in the words for her! Oh! had God put it into Miss Ashton's heart to send her that hymn? Surely she couldn't *know?*

With trembling fingers she smoothed out the paper and read the second verse:

"With forbidden pleasures
Would this vain world charm,
Or its sordid treasures
Spread to work me harm;
Bring to my remembrance
Sad Gethsemane,
Or, in darker semblance,
Cross-crowned Calvary."

A great lump had come in Philipine's throat and a mist across her eyes, so that she could hardly read the words of the next two verses:

"Should Thy mercy send me
Sorrow, toil and woe;
Or should pain attend me
On my path below;
Grant that I may ever
Cast my care on Thee.

"When my last hour cometh
Fraught with strife and pain,
When my dust returneth
To the dust again;

"No bitterness, no rebellion, but a deep, almost unutterable feeling of fervent thanksgiving."

On Thy truth relying
  Through that mortal strife,
Jesus, take me dying,
  To eternal life."

The mist had become "a weeping rain" now that poured down her cheeks; and slipping to her knees beside the table, Philipine buried her face in her hands in a passion of sorrowful, earnest penitence that shook her slender figure with noiseless sobs. As if a veil had been rent from before her eyes she realized the awful danger she had been in, and the Almighty Love that had protected her in that "hour of trial." The heartache was there yet, but with it now was no bitterness, no rebellion, but a deep, almost unutterable feeling of fervent thankfulness.

She could make no sound for fear of disturbing the sick mother who was so near; but kneeling there with her arm crooked over her tear-blinded eyes, Philipine's whole soul went out to her Lord in the whispered words that came so fervently from her lips: "Oh! Jesus! *Jesus!*"

She was up at four o'clock the next morning to get the weekly Saturday cleaning—washing the sidewalk, and the halls and stairs, and cleaning and filling all the lamps—finished before she got the morning meal and started for Maguire's. She walked rapidly this morning, with furtive glances at the street corners before she came to them, and a nervous start if any one brushed past her. When Carrie McIntyre came softly behind her and slipped her hand in her arm, Philipine started so violently that she swerved aside and screamed out in her fright.

"Why, Peenie, what's come to you?" laughed Carrie. "I didn't mean to scare you. Oh, for goodness' sake! what's the matter?" as she caught sight of Philipine's white face and heavy, swollen eyes. "Your mother—ain't—ain't—"

"She ain't dead, thank God!" answered Philipine. "If anything, she's a little better; but—" She stopped and her eyes filled up.

"Oh, what is it? Anything gone wrong? Anything I c'n do for you? Le' me help you if I can, Peenie. Ain't we friends?"

And then, with a longing for sympathy, in answer to the loving appeal in Carrie's brown eyes, Philipine told her story ; and if tears did run down her cheeks and Carrie's too, the people who were abroad at that early hour of the morning were too intent on their own business to pay much attention.

"The villin !" cried Carrie wrathfully when Peenie had finished. "The mean, contemptible villin ! I can't help it, Peenie, that's just what he is. But what you goin' to do 'bout his comin' to Maguire's ?"

"That's jus' what's worryin' me," Philipine said in a nervous, troubled way. "I'm *so* afraid of that ; an' yet—I can't give up my place while mother's so ill. An' yet— Oh ! Carrie, I *don't* want *ever* to meet him again. I oughtn't to, 'cause—" she gave a shamed, appealing glance at Carrie, and the color flooded her face.

And Carrie understood. "I know," she said, squeezing Philipine's hand. "But you won't care long for a man like that. Why, Hans Bierck's worth a hundred like him. I wish you could get a place somewhere else, though I'd

miss you awful, Peenie. Ain't you got no one to get you into O'Rell's? It's an awful nice restaurant; they never keep open evenin's, and the pay's better. Ain't you?"

"No," sighed Philipine. Then she added drearily, "I s'pose I'll have to stand it, that's all. But it'll be *awful*," and she shuddered.

Carrie's lips were pressed very close together, and a queer, pained look came into her face for a few minutes; but Philipine did not see it—she was wiping away the tears that would slip down her cheeks.

Presently Carrie spoke in her usual cheerful tone. "Say, Peenie, why don't you get off to-night—I'll stay in your place for you—an' go see Miss Ashton? Tell her the whole story same's you have me, and maybe she c'n get you into O'Rell's. I heard"—her voice shook a trifle, try as she would—"the other day that they was wantin' girls to O'Rell's—or leastway one girl—an' I'm pretty sure Miss Ashton c'n get it for any one she tries for. Say, will you?"

"But why don't *you* try for it?" asked Peenie, but with an eager, wistful light in her eyes.

"'Cause I ain't leavin' Maguire's jus' yet," answered Carrie lightly. "You take the place if you can get it, an' then p'raps you c'n get me in after a while. Why, if that ain't Maguire's —we've come down quick."

In the afternoon of that day Miss Ashton received a note; it was written on a half sheet torn from a cheap blank-book, and it read:

"DEAR MISS ASHTON: Peenie Haffner's comin' up to see you tonight, she is in greate trouble and wants to get away from Maguire, plese give her my place at o'rells and don't tell her it was for me, she don't know it. I will come to see you sune and explane don't think my dear frend and teacher that I am not grateful, but she wants it more than me. Goodbye, plese excuse writin' I am in a hurry

"Your loving frend,

"CARRIE."

"'Bear ye one another's burdens,'" said Miss Ashton softly, with shining eyes, as she slipped the torn piece of paper back into its envelope. "Dear, unselfish little Carrie!" and then she gave the envelope a loving pat as she laid it away in her desk.

When Philipine called that evening about eight o'clock, Miss Ashton took her into her own special sanctum—her "den" she called it—and seated her on the comfortable lounge with a cushion at her back. "Now," she said brightly, taking a seat beside her, "now tell me what this means—a visit from you on Saturday evening? I know mother isn't worse, for I saw Dr. Eames this afternoon, and he said that she was doing nicely. Come, my little girl, tell me."

But no words would come. Philipine could only look at her friend with eyes swimming in tears, her lips trembling in the vain effort to answer.

"Is it trouble, dear? Then tell it to me here," and taking off Philipine's hat, Miss Ashton drew the shining dark head to her shoulder and slipped her arm round the girl's slender waist. "Now tell me all about it, no matter what it is—you know we are friends."

And Philipine did tell her—everything—with bitter shame and scalding tears and hot, burning blushes, not sparing herself.

Miss Ashton listened in silence; she wiped

Peenie's eyes with her own handkerchief; now and then she bent her head and kissed her little friend's hot cheek or her forehead, and patted her shoulder.

When Philipine had finished her story, her Associate said decidedly: "Now, the first thing to be done is to take you out of Maguire's."

"Oh! Miss Ashton, if I *only* could! I'd do anything so I could get where I'd *never* see—him—again. Carrie's waited on him to-day while I hid; but I couldn't do that again, 'cause Maguire'd be mad an' the girls 'd suspect. Oh! Miss Ashton, Carrie's been awful good to me!"

"Carrie is a dear girl," said the Associate warmly. "Now, Philipine, I want you to give up your place at Maguire's on Monday morning, and come here to me at nine o'clock. I can get you in at O'Rell's I know; and if you are prepared, perhaps your duties there will begin right away—I hope so. You will get better pay, and I am very glad that your hours will be shorter. Will that do, dear?"

"*Do!* Oh! Miss Ashton, you're awful good

to me!" Philipine choked up, and for a minute or two she could not say another word.

"Now, I'm going to ask you to do something for me," Miss Ashton said, stroking the little work-roughened hand that lay on her lap. "I want you to promise me, Philipine, that should you ever meet that bad man anywhere—should you come across him accidentally or should he force himself upon you—that you will *never* speak to him or listen to *anything* that he might try to say to you. Will you promise, dear?"

"Oh! I will! I will!" Philipine cried excitedly. "Oh! Miss Ashton, pray for me that I'll never, *never* meet him again. Oh, it's so *hard* to bear! Will I have this awful feeling in my heart all my life?" And then she gave way and sobbed piteously.

Miss Ashton's arms went round her and held her tenderly. "Pray, my darling," she whispered, "pray with all your heart and soul and strength, and help and comfort *will* surely come. You know the Lord Jesus has borne our human nature. He knows that 'because of the frailty of our nature we cannot always stand upright,'

and He is ever ready, ever willing to hear and to answer prayer. Take your sorrow, your weakness, and your penitence to Him, He will understand."

"Oh, I do pray," sobbed the poor child; "but I feel as 'f I was almost wicked to tell Him about this. He never did wrong. He never was in love. Oh! Miss Ashton! I don't mean in sayin' that to be wicked."

"I know you don't," Miss Ashton said tenderly. "And He knows that too. He wants you to tell Him *everything*, Philipine. He can understand and comfort and help you better than any earthly friend can. Do you remember why? 'For we have not a High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but—listen—was *in all points tempted like as we are*, yet without sin.' Sin never touched Him; but temptations came to Him—strong and fierce—that so He might understand with the sympathy of a similar experience all that His children here on earth have to contend with. Oh, my dear, never be afraid or ashamed to go to your Lord with anything that comes in your daily life. He *never*

turns from those who seek Him. Suppose we ask His help and forgiveness, and His blessing now—shall we ?"

A grateful glance was Philipine's answer; and kneeling down together, Miss Ashton prayed most fervently for forgiveness and new strength and courage for poor, penitent little Philipine, and for the love of God to be in her heart.

When they arose from their knees Philipine's eyes were shining, and there was a new, sweet look of peace on her face. "That *has* helped me," she said shyly; then she added, a little ghost of a smile flickering bravely over her lips, "Thank you *so* much, Miss Ashton, for all you've done for me. You—you've been *awful* kind to me. I'll try to be good—truly I will. Good-night."

A BIT OF FRIENDLINESS.

As Rosie Tyler walked home from business one Friday afternoon she was thinking so earnestly about something that a deep frown came between her slender brown eyebrows, and she sighed heavily several times. Rosie was a Friendly girl with a sincere love and admiration for her Society and her dear Associate, and a keen pity for those girls who were so unfortunate as not to be members. This pity was especially extended to Katie Clennan, a girl about Rosie's own age, who was employed in the same store.

The two girls lived within a few blocks of each other, and frequently walked to and from their place of business together. Katie liked these walks, and though now she claimed not to be specially interested in the Friendly meetings,

somehow the conversation always came round to and lingered on that subject. Katie did not belong to the Friendly. She declared she didn't want to—wouldn't for a farm, etc., but all the same she listened to Rosie's vivid accounts of the fun the girls had in the gymnasium, the dancing class, the cooking school, and the no less enjoyable evenings in the library covering and sorting the books, or in the sewing class making warm, comfortable garments to put into the missionary boxes, and tiny dresses and sacks and socks for the little poor babies of the parish. Rosie's Associate, Miss Ashton, either read aloud some interesting story, or had what she called "homely" talks with the girls. These last Rosie said were the nicest of all—she did wish that Katie could hear them.

But at this point Katie would toss her head, "I don't want to belong to no Society where I can't go with the set I like, an' do 's I please, an' dress 's *I* choose," she would say with much emphasis.

And here was just where the rub came. Katie was a tall, rather pretty girl, and she fancied

"'I don't belong to no Society where I can't do's I please, an' dress's I choose,' she would say."

that the mop of crimped hair which she wore loosely braided and fastened up with a large bow of bright-colored ribbon and a showy gilt ornament, and the heavy, frizzy bang that reached to her eyebrows added to her good looks. She declared it was a great deal more "stylish" than Rosie's smooth braid and the short, wavy locks that just shaded her forehead. But Rosie knew Miss Ashton would not be willing to recommend for membership in the Friendly any girl whose head looked like Katie's. She had been obliged to tell Katie this when, early in their acquaintance, she expressed a desire to become a member of Rosie's beloved Society. Katie had felt very much insulted for a week or two; then she had made overtures of peace, to which Rosie gladly responded. After this, whenever Rosie said anything that sounded like a wish to see her a Friendly girl, Katie always treated the matter with a great show of scorn.

She wore very "loud"-looking hats and gay-colored, over-trimmed dresses, and went with a rough set of girls that talked and laughed very loud on the streets, and stayed out late and boast-

ed that they wouldn't stand "bossing from any father or mother." But with all these faults there were some good traits in Katie, and those were what attracted Rosie to her.

Mrs. Tyler did not approve of any intimacy between the two girls. "I don't want you to be-goin' with that Clennan girl, Rosie," she said one day. "She ain't fit company for a Friendly girl, an' I'm sure your 'Sociate wouldn't favor your doin' it."

"'Deed, mother," Rosie answered quickly, "there's more good in Katie than you think. I know she's rough and looks dirty an' dresses loud, but she tells the truth, an' if she says she'll do a thing you can depend on her every time. I was in hopes she would turn over a new leaf an' come into the Friendly—into our circle. When she knows Miss Ashton and gets in with our set, I'm sure she'll be different. After all, mother, how can we blame her—think of the miserable home she has."

"That's so," admitted Mrs. Tyler, "and I wouldn't object, child, if you could help her any —though that you never will, I'm pretty sure."

But Rosie was not so sure, and a few days after —on the Friday we saw her walking home—she got an opportunity to say something to Katie that had been in her mind for some time. For weeks past Katie had been trying to save enough money to buy a new dress, and to-day she announced that she had decided to get an electric blue, and trim it with green velveteen! "It's the newest thing out, an' awful stylish to have them two colors together, I can tell you," she said, catching a look of surprise in Rosie's eyes.

"O Katie, *don't* get such a conspicuous dress," said Rosie persuasively. "You're not a leader of the fashion; get a pretty brown, or a dark blue if you'd rather, and have it made without such a lot of trimming. An' then," catching Katie's hand in hers, "cut your bang and come be a Friendly girl."

"I just wish you'd mind your own business, Rosie Tyler," cried Katie, throwing the other girl's hand from her in a sudden gust of anger. "I think you're mighty imperdent to pass sich remarks on my clo'es."

"Oh, don't get angry, Katie," pleaded Rosie

eagerly; "I only do it because I really care for you an' want you to have a real good time. I *know* you'd enjoy yourself better with me at Friendly evenings than you do now standing on corners and walking up an' down the streets with those noisy girls. And it would be *so* easy to do what I ask you."

"You think so? Really!" sneered Katie, with a peculiar expression on her face that Rosie remembered afterward. "Very well, then, s'pose you practise what you preach. Look here, Rosie Tyler," coming very close and shaking her forefinger at Rosie. "You talk about my bang? When you put yours clean off your face an' keep it so, then I'll do the same."

"O Katie!" said Rosie in a surprised, hurt sort of way, putting her hand up to her pretty brown locks.

"Ah, ha! You don't like that, do you?" mocked Katie. "'Tain't such fun when it comes home, is it? An' if you'll stop off wearing your coat with the fur trimmin', an' go back to your old black one Sundays, I'll get a brown dress 'stead of a 'lectric blue; an' if you'll take

the feathers off your new hat, an' jest wear a bow on it—I'll do the same to my hat. An' if you'll do all three to onct, I'll do 'em too, an' go on probation for the Friendly as well. That's the biggest contrac' you ever had to fill in your life, me lady." She paused for a moment; then, as Rosie did not speak, she went on bitterly: "Now, where's all your fine talk gone to? Up in a balloon, eh! Thought I had you there. Talk is cheap, *cheap!* Don't say Girls' Friendly 'Ciety to me—I don't want *never* to hear of it again." They were alone in the wash-room when this happened; and hastily pitching on her street things, Katie stuck her bare hands inside the cuffs of her coat and ran noisily downstairs.

Rosie finished buttoning her jacket, and slipping on her cloth gloves, started for home in a dazed sort of way. She was greatly upset by what Katie had said—it had been so sudden, so unexpected that she had not had time to realize the full meaning of the other's girl's words until now, as she walked slowly homeward. At first she was very indignant at the terms that Katie had laid down. "The cheek of her expecting

me to make a show of myself for her," she thought, and again she put up her hand and felt of the soft curls under the brim of her hat. "And with my new coat an' hat, too—I guess not."

What made Miss Ashton's parting words last night flash into her mind just then? "Remember our motto, girls," she had said. "'Bear ye one another's burdens.' You all know that that means to stand by each other, not only by the members of our own organization, but by every girl or woman who needs help. We were not put into the world to live for ourselves alone, but to be helpful to those we meet in our daily lives. And that is the sort of Friendly girls I want you all to be—even if it costs you something, as it surely will." It had seemed to Rosie that her Associate's eyes rested longest on her, and then it was that she had made up her mind to coax Katie to join the Society—and now that was all over! Katie was too angry to listen to anything she should say; and, after all, what was there to say?

It was downright mean of Katie to expect her to dress in such a way when she (Katie) could

get into the Friendly without all that if she'd only fix herself like decent people. And Katie was that obstinate she would never give in unless Rosie did as she had asked—and that she wouldn't. "Why, mother wouldn't let me," thought Rosie with secret satisfaction. "I s'pose Katie's tearing mad; well, I can't help it. I declare, I think she just did it for temper, she doesn't really care to be a Friendly girl."

Didn't she?

It was then that Rosie remembered that peculiar expression on Katie's face. She stopped short in the street in her surprise. A sudden conviction came over her. "I do believe she does," she said out loud, with a little catch in her voice that somehow made her feel very sorry for Katie. "I'll speak to her tomorrow," Rosie determined, without in the least knowing what she intended to say. Then she went home.

But on the morrow Katie did not appear at the store, and in the course of the day, between whiles of measuring ribbons and making out

bills, Rosie did a good deal of hard thinking that resolved itself into some work that evening, which very much surprised her mother. "What on earth are you doin', child?" she asked. "Ain't that your best hat?"

Then Rosie told her story, and pleaded for her mother's consent to a plan she had in mind with a warmth, too, that finally carried her point.

"Well, well!" said Mrs. Tyler, shaking her head, "if times ain't changed. Wouldn't 've catched me doin' that when I was a girl."

"'Cause you weren't a Friendly girl." Rosie's loving glance took the edge off her saucy words. "But don't you think it's right for me to do it?" she asked.

"I won't say as it's wrong," answered Mrs. Tyler evasively, "but certainly times an' girls has changed."

A good half hour before church time on Sunday morning Rosie went round to Katie's house. It was a forlorn place, in the rear of another building. Little Jo Clennan sat on the wooden stoop eating a large piece of dry bread.

"Where's Katie?" asked Rosie. She had never been there before, and rather dreaded having to face the whole family.

"Upstairs," Jo answered briefly, motioning with the bread over his shoulder.

"Go tell her one of the girls from the store where she works wants to speak to her in the hall," said Rosie; "only don't say who 'tis, Jo, an' I'll give you two cents. D'ye hear?"

"Yep!" and Jo vanished up the dark, rickety stairs. In a moment or two he reappeared breathing hard. "She's comin'," he announced, and snatching the pennies that Rosie held out, he disappeared down the alleyway to spend them.

Rosie stood behind the half-opened hall door, and watched Katie come down the stairs. She wore a dirty, torn wrapper which was open at the neck, and her hair was done up all over her head in crimping pins and curl papers. There was a sulky look on her face which deepened as she recognized her visitor.

"Jo said you wanted to see me," she remarked ungraciously, without any preliminary greeting.

"Yes," said Rosie; that was all she could say for a minute or two, her heart beat so fast; then she stepped out into the light and looked up at Katie. "I've come to tell you that I'm willing to do my share of the bargain, Katie," she said; "will you stick to yours?" Her lips quivered and her grey eyes looked anxiously up at Katie as she stood above her on the stairs.

Katie bent forward eagerly. "What do you mean?" she asked roughly.

"See." Rosie pointed to the shabby black jacket she wore; next to her hat, from which all the trimming had been taken and replaced by a dark ribbon bow; then she pushed her hat back, and Katie saw that the pretty, fluffy, brown curls that had been Rosie's pride were brushed smoothly back off her forehead. "You said if I'd do these things you would too," went on Rosie, "and go on probation to be a Friendly girl. Now, will you—*will* you, Katie? Oh, I *wish* you would."

"How long 'll this last?" asked Katie suspiciously, though her cheeks had grown very pink and her eyes were shining.

"Till-you're in the Friendly—or as long as you like," said Rosie generously. "Will you come?"

"Yes, I'll come with you t'morrer night—an' I'll get the brown dress, an' I'll take the trimmin' all off me hat—an'—an'—I'll brush me bang all off me face." Katie collapsed in a heap on the stairs, and crooking her arm over her face, sobbed aloud.

In an instant Rosie was kneeling beside her, patting her shoulder, soothing her. With a quick sympathy born of a like experience, she whispered, "You won't look a bit bad with your hair turned off, Katie, I know you won't. Your forehead ain't as high as mine; it's just the shape to wear your hair back. You see if you don't get to like it better than the bang. And then you know we needn't wear it so always. An' you'll never, *never* regret being a Friendly girl—we do have such lovely times."

"Perhaps she won't take me," suggested Katie, with a newly found timidity.

"Miss Ashton? 'Deed she will when she sees you an' I tell her how you always tell the truth an' keep your word."

That last remark was, unintentionally, a masterly stroke on Rosie's part. Katie rose to her feet, the sulky expression was gone from her face, the corners of her mouth curved upward with renewed courage, her brown eyes shone. "There's the church bell," she said. "I won't make you late, Rosie, but if you'll be home I'll come 'round to your house this evenin' 'stead of goin' with the old set. Then you can tell me all 'bout t'morrer night—eh ?"

"Yes, do." Rosie's tone was very cordial. "Come early, an' maybe we can go to church together afterward. The music to our church is just lovely Sunday nights. Good-by, Katie." She held out her hand, a bright smile was on her lips. The grey and the brown eyes met each other, frankly, sweetly, steadfastly ; then with a simultaneous impulse the two girls kissed each other.

Rosie turned at the end of the alleyway and looked back. Katie was standing on the wooden stoop watching her ; she waved her hand to Rosie, then went into the house and closed the door.

* * * * *

All this happened about two years ago, and to-day Katie Clennan is one of the steadiest, most reliable girls in Miss Ashton's circle of the Girls' Friendly Society. She and Rosie Tyler are close friends; there is a memory of the past between them which is a strong bond of sympathy. And each girl in her own way and life is trying to practise the Friendly motto, "Bear ye one another's burdens."

University of
Connecticut
Libraries